

KATE
THURSTON'S
CHAUTAUQUA
CIRCLES

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KATE THURSTON'S CHAUTAUQUA CIRCLES

BY

MRS. MARY H. FIELD

SECOND EDITION.



MEADVILLE PENNA
FLOOD AND VINCENT
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KATE THURSTON'S CHAUTAUQUA CIRCLES.

CHAPTER I.

NEW ENTERPRISES.

THE new schoolhouse at San Benito was done at last. The carpenters had been gone a month and the painters were putting on their last strokes. The Chinaman who had cleared away the debris from around the building was engaged to give the interior as faithful a putting to rights. The new school furniture was already in the freight room at the railway station; and now the trustees held a meeting. There was a new trustee as well as a new schoolhouse; indeed the new trustee was the cause of the new schoolhouse, and at the meeting the new trustee, as his custom was, made himself distinctly felt.

Old Colonel Dobson, who had ruled San Benito's educational interests for years, reluctantly now passed over the scepter to young Dr. Hall, who was evidently the coming man of San Benito, and who had recently received its unanimous

vote for school trustee. At this meeting to which allusion had been made, the question as to what teacher should preside in the new schoolhouse was to be decided. Colonel Dobson said he "reckoned that Sally Parker, who had taught the school for nigh on to five years and would work cheap," was the proper person to employ, but Dr. Hall was strongly in favor of a new teacher with later methods and better education, a Normal School graduate with modern ideas. As to salary he was heartily opposed to cheap teachers, and thought San Benito could afford to let the new teacher's wages match the requirements of the day. "If San Benito is going to hold up its head with other towns its children must be well taught," he said, "and no good teacher can be had for a pittance."

Dr. Hall had a way of carrying his points, and thus it came to pass that Miss Kate Thurston brought her Normal School diploma, her new trunk, her bright pleasing face, her thoughtful young head, and her two years of successful teaching experience, to the little California town of San Benito. She found her new home very

picturesque and charming, nestling among the foothills of the coast range of mountains which separated it from the great Pacific, and her boarding place in the town to which she went on recommendation of the trustees, proved all that she could desire. The family was made up of a widowed mother with a gentle, patient face, two slender daughters who worked at dress-making, and two boarders, one, a young man, was a clerk in the largest dry goods store of San Benito, the other a youth of brawny mold and vigorous appetite, was a blacksmith's apprentice. Mrs. Brooks, the housekeeper, had a look and way like Kate's own mother, with much native refinement and kindness.

So Kate settled down with scarcely a homesick pang, in her pleasant little gable-windowed room in Mrs. Brooks' cottage. She unpacked her trunk, arranged her simple wardrobe in a convenient closet and in a chest of drawers, and then with a sort of cheerful zeal began to take out from their wrappings her beloved books. There was no special book-case in the room, but this lack she seemed to have anticipated, for

from the bottom of her trunk she brought out a set of hanging book-shelves and a little rack which could stand on a table and hold a dozen volumes. Then she went down stairs for permission to put a couple of screws into the wall, and coming back in a moment went to work in a brisk fashion to put up the shelves. In a little while she had her books all in order on them and stood back with her hands behind her and her head a little on one side taking a survey of her accomplished work. First, of course, came a well worn array of schoolbooks ; then there was Hammerton's "Intellectual Life"; a volume of selections from Ruskin ; a "History of Art" ; half a dozen volumes of Rolfe's Shakespeare ; half a dozen or more "Little Classics" ; "Bits of Talk," by H. H.; a volume of Mrs. Browning's Poems ; a Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Longfellow, and Tennyson, in standard editions; in a row by themselves some capital children's books evidently for schoolroom reading : Hawthorne's "Tanglewood Tales and Wonder Book"; Hans Andersen's Tales ; "William Henry's Letters to His Grandmother" ; "Hans Brinker's

Skates"; "Little Women" and "Little Men" and "Nellie's Silver Mine." The upper shelf held the Chautauqua books for the current year, '83-84: "A Brief History of Greece"; "Pictures from English History"; "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation"; "Lessons in Vegetable Biology," and half a dozen of the well known little ten-cent Chautauqua text books.

Miss Kate surveyed the whole miniature library with an expression of entire satisfaction and then altered slightly the arrangement of the Chautauqua books. As she ran her hand over them, evening and settling them in their final places, one could easily detect a lingering touch which, if it had been on the sunny head of a little child, one would call a caress. She then moved the small table which was part of the room's furnishing near the window, opened both its leaves, took out of her trunk a large square of olive green flannel bordered with bright-figured cretonne, and spread it on the table, then set her book-rack on it and put into it her Teachers' Bible, her hymn book, Peloubet's Notes, Farrar's "Life of Christ," "The Imitation

of Christ," by Thomas à Kempis, a small Webster's Dictionary, a classical dictionary, and a cyclopedia of English literature. Near the rack she laid her Harper's Geography, a brand-new classical atlas, and her portfolio of writing materials. She hung her pretty calendar near the window, then hung in a good light two or three choice engravings, set her home photographs on a bracket where the dear familiar eyes could watch her constantly, and then sat down in the little cane-seated rocker and smiled at the "homey" look which the room had taken on so quickly. There was white straw matting on the floor, white drapery on the bed, and a white muslin curtain at the window. The air of the whole room was cool and pleasant and the young maiden felt a sense of deep content in its clean simplicity and refinement.

The next morning she went over by appointment to the new schoolhouse and there met the trustees. As she glanced around with the air of one to the manor born, praised the height and size of the main room and its sunny windows, looked critically at the plan for ventilation, and

made sensible suggestions as to the arrangement of the blackboards and desks, Dr. Hall's face expressed solid pleasure, while even Colonel Dobson caught a ray or two of enthusiasm. He beamed upon Miss Thurston patronizingly and informed the loungers at the post-office corner that evening that he had got a schoolma'am now for San Benito who was "*smart, smart as a whip!*" and he smiled complacently as if to himself alone San Benito owed this phenomenal acquisition.

School opened the first day of September. There were forty scholars great and small, all ages, sizes, and kinds of children, mostly of American parentage but with a sprinkling of Germans; two or three little Italians, half a dozen black-eyed, black-haired Spanish children, and one small ebony-hued son of Ham who kept his white teeth almost constantly in sight, notwithstanding a ragged coat, bare feet, and the not infrequent snubs of the superior Anglo-Saxon.

The new teacher was almost appalled at the amount of work to be done. She had not been

long in the field, and only in a graded school, but she went resolutely at the business of classifying and organizing and did the best she could under the circumstances. One thing she accomplished apparently without effort: she won the hearts of her scholars. At the very first recess the big boys pronounced her "jolly," the girls said she was "perfectly splendid," and little black Pete brought her in the afternoon a bunch of bright marigolds, which she took with cordial thanks and wore in the belt of her white apron all the rest of the day.

The first few days were so full of school work that there was not a moment's time for anything else, but when a month had gone and order had been evolved from chaos, and Miss Thurston had begun to get a little acquainted in San Benito, had been to church and Sunday-school and undertaken there a class of big boys, and had become a little familiar with the atmosphere of the whole place, her heart went out toward the hard-working, uncheered mothers, the aimless young women, the young men idling away their evenings on the street or in

the hotel bar-room, and as she sat down to her pleasant "Chautauqua hour" one evening, she seemed to have a sudden inspiration: "Yes," she said, half aloud, "why not have a Chautauqua Circle in San Benito? It is the very place for one!"

With Kate Thurston deeds followed thoughts as promptly as sunrise follows dawn. She went directly down stairs to talk with Mrs. Brooks, whom she found in the family sitting room, mending in her kind motherly fashion the young blacksmith's coat. He sat by in his shirt sleeves reading the *San Francisco Argus*, while the big, unshaded kerosene lamp shone with an impartial glare into the eyes alike of mender and reader. The two daughters of the house, Martha and Jennie, were rocking listlessly, each in a little cane-seated rocker on either side of the fire-place, where a wood fire gave out its cheerful glow, changing the very commonplace room and scene into a pretty family picture.

"Come right in, Miss Thurston," Mrs. Brooks said cordially, "we like to have a call from you at any time."

But Kate, whose quick eyes always took in everything, said, "Excuse me one moment, Mrs. Brooks," and running up to her own room returned in a moment with a lamp-shade of green paper which she dropped lightly over the uncomfortable lamp.

"There, Mrs. Brooks, try that and see if it isn't pleasanter," she said, "and if you think it is I'll make you a present of it. Eyes are too precious to be put out just for lack of a bit of green paper."

There was a chorus of thanks as Kate took a proffered chair and joined the family group.

"What do you find in the newspaper, Mr. Thompson?" she asked.

"Wa'al not much of anything," responded the young man, and then, as if half doubtful if the fault were his or the paper's, he added, "I've been reading it near an hour, and every time I come to anything worth reading, I've read it out loud. Just ask these ladies what it amounts to," and he waved his big hand toward the two girls and laughed in genuine amusement at his and their predicament when

challenged to tell what valuable information that big finely printed eight-page sheet, known as *The Daily Argus*, had conveyed to their receptive minds. They all joined in the laugh; but Jennie, the younger of the two sisters, who had a vein of originality, came to the rescue of the newspaper: "There was the weather report," she said; "we all want to know whether these clouds mean rain—and there—" after a moment's thought, "don't you remember, John, about that traveling humbug with the stone to put in the lamp to keep the kerosene from exploding? It was a good thing to put mother on her guard about that," and they all laughed again over the allusion to Mrs. Brooks' well known weakness toward itinerant peddlers.

"Then there was that horrid murder in St. Louis," ventured Martha, "maybe Miss Thurston would like to hear that."

"No, no," Miss Thurston begged in accents of real distress, as young Thompson began to search for it. "Please let me tell you what I was reading just before I came down stairs. It was one

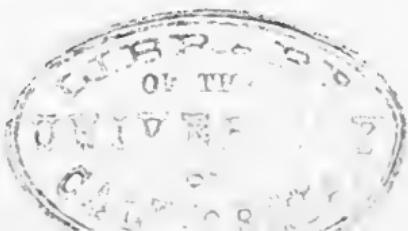
of my Chautauqua books. Do you know what that means?"

There was a general confession of ignorance, and she went on in her wise, pleasant way: "I'm sure it's not at all strange that you don't know, but this is just the time for me to tell you about it"; and in a few words she told the story of Chautauqua Lake, its attractive summer meetings, and the gradual development of the great Chautauqua scheme for popular education. As she advanced with her story she leaned forward and talked earnestly and eloquently of the grand possibilities which the Chautauqua idea unfolded before the minds of those who longed for more knowledge and broader avenues of thought and life, and her little audience was quite moved by her enthusiasm. She almost forgot to tell them about her book, as she talked on and on of her beloved Chautauqua, but was recalled by Jennie's question, "What is the name of your book that you are reading now—the one you started to tell us about? May I go up and bring it down to you?"

"Yes, indeed, you may," said Miss Thurston,

"that will be the very best way to tell you all about it. It lies right on my table and is called 'Biographical Stories.'"

Jennie brought the book with cheerful alacrity. Mr. Thompson put on his repaired coat and changed places with Miss Thurston, who talked for a few moments about the author of the book, America's most original and beautiful story-teller, Hawthorne, and then began to read aloud in a cultured, well modulated voice the simple, quaint, delightful pages of her book. She did not omit the little thread of story on which the biographical sketches are hung, but read it all, explaining that, though written for children, it seemed to her as true and wise and good for grown people as for young folks; nor did her hearers, though far less appreciative than herself, fail to catch the inimitable charm and sweetness of the great master's style. If she paused as if to close the evening's reading, they begged her to go on, until, almost ere she knew it herself, and notwithstanding the many explanatory and illustrative bits of talk into which she had branched off, the little book was



finished and the clock on the mantel struck ten.

They were all converted to the Chautauqua idea.

"Let us start a Circle!" cried Jennie.

"I'd like to join first-rate," said John.

"Pears like I'm too old and too busy and out of the way of such things," said Mrs. Brooks, her pale cheeks flushing at the vastness of the project, "but I'd like to meet with the rest if I couldn't do anything more."

"Indeed you're not 'too' anything, dear Mrs. Brooks," said Miss Thurston warmly; "that is what Chautauqua is for,—to help the tired and busy and over-worked people to something fresh and restful."

"I'm sure mother can keep ahead of me in reading or studying," said Martha Brooks. "Don't you know, ma, how you always helped us with our books when we went to school? Ma was a splendid scholar when she was young, Miss Thurston; she's got a Shakespeare she won for a prize when she was a girl, back in the States."

"There! there!" cried Miss Thurston merrily,

taking Mrs. Brooks' work-worn hands in her own, "we'll not let you hide your light under a bushel any longer. You shall be one of our charter members, and to-morrow we'll all invite our friends to meet in the schoolhouse some evening within a week and organize the 'San Benito Chautauqua Circle.'"

The next morning at breakfast there was an eager discussion of plans. The other member of the family, Mr. Fowler, was made acquainted with the scheme. He was a somewhat vain and dressy young fellow with that vaguely superior style which in California is universally known as "high-toned," and he might naturally hesitate over joining an association not distinctly aristocratic, but Miss Thurston's manifest leadership in the affair won his guarded consent and his promise to invite two or three of his acquaintances. Thus there was a nucleus of six members to begin work for the new C. L. S. C.

When Miss Thurston went to her school that morning she dropped a letter into the post-office addressed to the State Chautauqua Secretary, asking for fifty circulars giving the aim and

method of the society and containing the year's course of study, also for two dozen application blanks; and by the time appointed for the public meeting she was well provided with these accessories. She also took over to the meeting her own set of Chautauqua books and the magazine which is the well-known organ of the Circle. The schoolhouse was lighted up pleasantly and some twenty-five or thirty people were scattered around in little groups talking in neighborly fashion when Miss Thurston and her friends of the Brooks household arrived. It required a little courage for her to walk forward to her desk and deposit her books with the air of a presiding officer, but she was gallantly supported by young Thompson, who had put on his Sunday clothes and was from head to foot in a highly polished condition. The minister of the village church, the Rev. Mr. Chapman, was also present and ready to lend a hand. So, greatly to Kate's relief, he consented to take the post of responsibility behind the desk, provided she would do all the talking. Now Kate had never faced an audience of grown-up people except

upon school exhibition days, and her heart beat in the most unmanageable fashion when Mr. Chapman arose and said: "You will please come to order, my friends, and Miss Thurston will address the meeting."

Poor Kate arose, grasped a Chautauqua circular, and, clinging to that small spar, launched forth upon her maiden public speech. Her first glance forward revealed to her Colonel Dobson on one of the front seats, and two or three other dignitaries in close proximity. She caught a glimpse also of Dr. Hall's intelligent face in the background, and in that kind of condensed thought which characterizes the swooning brain, wondered what his opinion was in regard to woman on the lecture platform.

Most of the people seemed very far away and the young speaker had a sudden inspiration: "Will you all please come forward?" she said, "I can talk to you so much more easily"; and by the time the little commotion of moving was over she was quite ready to plunge into her subject.

"You are all aware," she began, "that we have

met to talk over the Chautauqua idea and if possible to organize a Chautauqua Circle. The word Chautauqua doesn't mean much as yet to the people west of the Rockies, except where the Chautauqua idea has taken root and is bearing its beautiful spiritual fruit, but at the East where all our educational systems have had their origin, and to which we must look for our inspirations till California outgrows its material age, there Chautauqua means a hope and a promise to hosts of aspiring souls. It will soon grow to be a familiar word with us all. We have only to say it resolutely three or four times and it loses its foreign and aboriginal sound. Let us say it together," and she wrote *Chautauqua* on the blackboard in a bold hand, and gave them all an opportunity to say it over with her till it was learned. Then she described to them Chautauqua Lake and its great annual Assembly and grew very eloquent over the founders. Finally she read from the little circular the concise statement in regard to the C. L. S. C. and showed the audience her books and *The Chautauquan*. John Thompson and

Jennie Brooks then distributed the circulars and forms of application, and Kate sat down feeling very warm, and sure she had said too much or too little, she couldn't tell which. Her distress was completed by Colonel Dobson's arising in the most patronizing way and saying, with much prefatory eloquence, that he considered this plan a great thing for "people without eddication."

Poor Kate herself was altogether too well versed in human nature not to know that even a tacit confession of ignorance is an unpleasant thing to require of an ordinary mortal, and in her little speech she had carefully avoided saying that the Chautauqua course of reading was especially intended to remedy a lack of early education. She had dwelt with the tact of a bright teacher on the other side of the subject and presented it as an excellent supplement to even a good education, and as an admirable review, of which even the learned were glad to avail themselves. She knew very well that Colonel Dobson's remark would repel all people of his own caliber who prided

themselves on their learning, but she concluded to let it pass unchallenged, especially as the minister followed the Colonel quickly with a kind endorsement of what she had said.

Then came the usual whispering, hesitation, and delay, with all of which Miss Thurston was very patient, begging her friends to ask questions which a few finally ventured to do. At the end of half an hour John and Jennie gathered up the filled-out applications and behold there were ten ! Kate glanced them over with interest. The names were those of the minister and his wife ; Mrs. Brooks ; Jennie ; Martha ; John Thompson ; John's "boss," as he always termed his employer, a blacksmith with a good strong German face ; a Mrs. Fiske, of whom Kate had heard as a bright intellectual woman ; and two young ladies who were older sisters of one of Kate's schoolboys, Flora and Lizzie Towner.

Kate was just a little disappointed that her eloquence had not persuaded more, but she said with a smile that ten was a very good number and they would proceed at once to organize.

Dr. Hall rose to say that nothing but his feeling that he must work in special professional lines that winter kept him from joining the Circle, but he would try to attend the meetings if he might be allowed the privilege. Colonel Dobson here got upon his feet again and said he would encourage the Circle by dropping in now and then, while young Fowler slipped out about this time without filling out an application, thus withdrawing his support and leaving John Thompson the only young man in the society.

Mr. Chapman promptly nominated Miss Thurston for President, thus forestalling her scheme to nominate him for the same responsible position. She was elected before she had time to think whether it was best to accept the position or not. Mrs. Fiske was made Secretary, John Thompson, Treasurer, and the San Benito Chautauqua Circle was an established and officered institution. In a few minutes more it was decided to send for the needed number of books and begin work directly, also to meet on every other Friday evening and have as thorough a review of the topics gone over as the

time would permit, enlivened by the various devices which the fertile brain of the President and the suggestions of *The Chautauquan* magazine might afford. Half a dozen copies of the magazine were ordered—one by Dr. Hall and one by Colonel Dobson, who was not to be outdone by the new trustee in any regard whatever. Kate had offered the use of her copy to the Brooks household. Nothing remained to be done but to ask the blessing of the great Teacher upon the new organization, which the minister did with much earnestness. John Thompson put out the lights, and Kate, thoroughly tired, but with the blessed consciousness that she was "lending a hand" to an enterprise of wide and noble possibilities, walked home with Mrs. Brooks along the uneven and dusty streets of San Benito.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE SAN BENITO CIRCLE IS FAIRLY LAUNCHED.

THERE was a little delay about getting the Chautauqua books, but before the time for the first meeting they had arrived and were distributed, and Kate had felt paid for all her troubles when she saw the timid pleasure with which Mrs. Brooks put on her spectacles and sat down to learn her first lesson.

“Pears like I wasn’t more than sixteen,” she said, as she turned the pages with hands that trembled with eagerness.

Nor was it any less a reward for Kate to see John Thompson making an extra effort to remove the grime of his day’s toil from his brawny hands ere he took possession of his book. He was washing and scrubbing at a sink on a side porch where he usually performed his ablutions, and talking with Jennie Brooks through the

open window on which his Greek history lay.

"Who'd a thought," he exclaimed, "that I'd ever tackle such a book as that!"

"Just as likely as that we would," answered Jennie. "Martha and I haven't had much chance at school since pa died, and they never had any history but United States in school, anyway, and that was dreadful dry and hard to learn."

Kate went down into the sitting room in the evening to give them all a little start. She always brought an air of good cheer with her and they claimed now that she was in the "very nick of time." So she drew up by the lamp and taking the Greek history said :

"It is just delightful to think what a houseful of Chautauquans we are. I wish Dr. Vincent could see us! Why, it's a real economy of time to have so many people living together who want to do the same thing. Don't you see in how many ways we can help each other? One can read aloud sometimes and the others can sew or crochet—"

"That'll help me," said John, "crocheting is right in my line."

Of course they all laughed, but Kate nothing daunted went on : "Then one dictionary hunter can save time and eyesight for the rest ; and we'll be coming upon bright ideas in the papers and everywhere that will throw light on all our studies, and each one will have the benefit of all that the others bring in of these gleanings ; and last but not least we shall all be thinking about the same things and talking them over at table and everywhere, and of course we shall sharpen each other's wits."

"Miss Thurston has a very nice way of saying 'we,'" said John.

"To be sure I'll say we," answered she, "unless you think it sounds too conceited in me to take it for granted that I may have some thoughts worth telling as well as the rest of you," whereupon they all had another laugh.

"Now, have you a dictionary, girls, and an atlas?" asked the teacher.

Fortunately there was a good old Webster in the parlor cupboard—a dictionary altogether too new looking for the credit of the family—and it was now brought forth from its hiding



place. Atlas there was none, but Miss Thurston thought the maps in the history would answer very well, and her own good atlas was always at their service. And so they chatted together and made their plans and grew accustomed to the idea of turning their plain little sitting room into an academy and themselves into scholars.

When Friday evening came the Circle gathered by invitation in Mrs. Fiske's beautiful parlors. Every one was on hand, for Mrs. Fiske had sent a kind little note of special invitation to each one including the "visiting members," as she had named the two trustees. Mr. Fiske was San Benito's principal lawyer, and his home was far more elegant than any other in the little village, but its gracious mistress was never more hospitable than to the Chautauqua Circle.

Mr. Fiske considered his wife as just a trifle "cranky" in her philanthropies and she had undergone not a little teasing in regard to this new enterprise, but she had refused to be at all disconcerted by it and went steadily on with

her preparations. She had heard of the Chautauqua movement through an Eastern cousin and was in just the mood to co-operate heartily with Miss Thurston, with whom she had quite fallen in love, as she frankly confessed to her husband. That wary gentleman had lighted his cigar after dinner, on this momentous occasion, and started toward the door with—“You’ll excuse me, my dear, this evening. I’ll go down to the office and write awhile.” But his wife followed him with her most winning smile. “I don’t believe it would bore you one bit, Charlie, if you would stay at home,” she said. “Stay and help me, won’t you?” And she looked so persuasive that Mr. Fiske, who was a good deal of a courtier, found her quite irresistible, so he yielded with, “Why, yes, Lottie, I’ll stay if you really wish it so much; and just to please you I’ll be a good little boy and go right along to school if that’s what you’re scheming for, but I warn you if this young schoolma’am of yours is as nice and pretty as you say, I may get too fond of my books.”

He was rewarded for his good behavior in a very satisfactory way, and when the guests began to arrive, Mr. Fiske stood beside his wife, as courteous a host as could be desired.

Miss Thurston introduced John Thompson, who was not a little embarrassed at first by the unwonted elegance of his surroundings, and poor Kate's blood mounted to her temples as he dropped heavily into a luxuriantly upholstered chair with a crash that was truly alarming. But Mrs. Fiske came to the rescue with womanly tact and was not long in drawing the young man into a really intelligent conversation about his business. The awkward boy forgot his unwieldy hands and feet and answered Mrs. Fiske's artful questions with a good sense and an amount of knowledge which rewarded her for her politeness.

One ring followed another in rapid succession and soon the dozen friends were all assembled. Martha and Jennie Brooks had often sewed for Mrs. Fiske and so felt quite at home, and their mother was a member of the same church as the hostess and thus had the best and strongest of

relationships with her. Altogether there was not nearly so much restraint and chilliness as Kate had feared. She found to her great delight that Mrs. Fiske had laid upon the table a fine classical atlas and a copy of Bryant's Homer, also a beautiful art album with photographs of the Acropolis and other famous places in Athens as well as a few of the most renowned pieces of ancient statuary. She had not supposed that such help could be found in San Benito, but was only having the experience which every one has who tries to help those about them. From the most unexpected quarters and often with the most surprising opportuneness just the needed assistance comes.

The latest arrival was Dr. Hall, and he brought a priceless bit of old pottery, evidently part of a once beautiful vase, which a friend had sent him from the excavations at Mycenæ.

The Circle was not prepared with a regular lesson this evening as the books had not been distributed in season, but all were now ready to begin, and the young President had many plans and arrangements to propose, which, with a

bright talk about the importance of the little land of Hellas in the world's history, filled the evening. Mr. Fiske was drawn into this conversation and grew really eloquent over the culture, brilliancy, and long renown of the old Hellenes, while Dr. Hall said some equally good things about the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and their place in literature.

Mrs. Fiske brought a book from the library describing ancient Greek life and customs and read interesting extracts, after which the book was passed around to give all an opportunity to see the old dress, houses, utensils, and other matters of everyday life. Finally Miss Thurston read from the *Iliad*, at Mrs. Fiske's request, the parting of Hector and Andromache, and charmed them all with her simple, natural, expressive reading of the exquisite story.

The lesson was assigned for the next meeting; a very brief one, as it was the first, and Miss Thurston was wise enough not to let any one be discouraged at the outset. A topic was assigned to each regular member and an essayist appointed to prepare a ten-minute paper upon

the laws of Solon. This essayist was selected by drawing slips of paper from a box and the honor fell upon our friend John Thompson.

Miss Thurston then distributed some "Chautauqua Songs," and they all made their first attempt at some genuine Chautauqua music. With the help of Mrs. Fiske's piano it went off extremely well.

The Rev. Mr. Chapman invited the Circle to meet next time at the parsonage, which offer was accepted, and the Circle after a cordial and grateful good night to its hosts, straightened itself out into a procession and then diverged into little groups of two or more homeward bound people. We may be sure there were no unfavorable criticisms on the evening's entertainment.

"I never saw anything like it in all my life," said Mrs. Brooks with genuine enthusiasm; "'pears like the most sensible, improvin', Christian-like evenin' I ever spent outside of a regular prayer meetin'."

John Thompson was unusually still as they walked along. He was thinking that he would see whether a fellow of his age could begin down

at the foot and little by little learn how to talk as Dr. Hall and Mr. Fiske did—"sort of easy and yet so smart."

Kate Thurston was saying over and over to herself: "I am *so* glad I thought of a Chautauqua Circle in San Benito."

Mr. and Mrs. Fiske were lingering over the little fire still glowing in their grate. "Were you bored, Charlie? Now tell the truth," she asked.

"Well," he laughingly admitted, "one doesn't need to be a very great sufferer when your friend Miss Thurston reads Homer!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CIRCLE MEETS AT THE PARSONAGE.

IT is very certain that the land of Hellas received most unwonted attention in San Benito during the next two months, but nowhere was it discussed with quite so much earnestness and enthusiasm as in the plain little home of Mrs. Brooks. The young blacksmith did not study up the subject of old Solon and his laws without enlisting the lively interest of all the family. There was great ransacking of old histories, of neighbors' encyclopedias, and of other possible sources of information. Then John, having thus secured his material, wrote and re-wrote in the seclusion of his own room for several evenings, until with an air of immense relief, yet with a humility really pathetic, he brought his completed essay to Miss Thurston for criticism and correction. His honest face

was suffused with blushes and his hands fairly trembled as he gave his half dozen pages of foolscap to the schoolmistress, with the apologetic remark that he "always was dreadful awkward with his pen."

Ah ! the tact and good sense, the frankness and yet the kindness, with which that gentle critic corrected the spelling, straightened the grammar, and improved the rhetoric of that paper, and then made John supremely happy by saying : "Now re-write this, John, and then read it to the Circle as well as it deserves to be read, and we'll all be proud of you."

This literary effort had seriously affected John's appetite for a whole week, and Mrs. Brooks was growing quite alarmed about his health, but when the great enterprise was fairly off his mind her anxiety was entirely relieved ; John's favorite viands disappeared with their old rapidity.

The table conversation at Mrs. Brooks' became decidedly classical. Young Fowler grew more and more ill at ease as the family talked of old Hellenic mythology, of Homer and Hesiod,

of Lycurgus and Solon. For several days he maintained a dignified silence, and then, as Thompson's dawning superiority grew more evident, he quietly succumbed to the prevailing current, asked Miss Thurston one morning for a form of application, paid his fee, and sent for the books. Alas! the supply in San Francisco was exhausted, and for several weeks Fowler meekly borrowed his rival's history and caught up with the rest as fast as he could. His evenings were not so much his own as if he had been in other business, but he found that there was many an odd minute, when no customer was in, that could be put to excellent use. His Greek history went regularly to the store with him, and he soon equaled John Thompson in his interest in Dr. Schliemann and other archæologists.

Miss Thurston was made very happy by the reports which John brought home in regard to his employer, Christian Leib. He had been well educated in "the fatherland," and was delighted to be again doing some intellectual work. He and John had exchanged ideas

about Solon and the Athenian democracy, and when this conversation was repeated by John to Miss Thurston, she said: "Mr. Leib must be called out at our next meeting. His ideas are worth telling and we must not let his diffidence keep him in the background any longer. I for one like his strong German accent."

At the parsonage there was careful preparation for the next meeting of the Circle. The good minister and his wife made a great effort to do the reading faithfully, but it was a heroic performance for a busy country pastor with his multifarious duties; still more heroic for the minister's wife with her three little children, house work, sewing, calling, church work, constant interruptions,—only two hands and two feet and work enough for a dozen pairs of each. It was one of those blessed families, however, where they bear one another's burdens, and so the burdens never seemed unbearable. Mrs. Chapman had a way of guarding her husband's study door for a few hours every morning, thus diverting from him a thousand needless calls.

And he had an equally considerate way of seeing that she, too, had a little time each day for the books and music which had been so dear to her girlish heart, a fact which he well knew had made no small part of her charm to his own book-loving taste. Sometimes he carried off the three babies for an hour or two of outdoor or indoor play ; sometimes he lent a hand, without the slightest loss of dignity, at almost any kind of domestic work ; and always when the children were tucked up in bed he brought a book or paper and read aloud to the busy young mother whose mending and making often lasted through the whole evening.

The parsonage was a rather small house with a decidedly small parlor which Mr. Chapman used as a study, a smaller sitting room, two or three bed rooms, and a kitchen which was by far the largest room in the house, so that Mrs. Chapman used it also for a dining room ; and in summer, when the cooking range went into a rear kitchen, it was the family gathering place more frequently than any other. As they planned for the Circle they surveyed the study

and the little sitting room with equal disfavor.

"Could the kitchen possibly do?" suggested the minister in a sort of despairing tone, and with no thought that his wife would tolerate the idea.

"Why, I never thought of such a thing," she answered, "but do let us take a look at it."

It was Friday morning and in the evening their guests were due. They had been talking in the study, and now they proceeded to view the kitchen in the rôle of a reception room. It was a long and rather narrow room extending entirely across the house, a cooking stove at one end with cupboard and cooking table; at the other end a small extension table. A new bright-checked matting was on the floor and pretty, modern shades were at the windows.

"It would hardly do to ask Mr. and Mrs. Fiske out here, I suppose," said Mr. Chapman, half laughing, as his wife stood with a look of deep calculation knitting her smooth brow.

"Dexter," she exclaimed, "now is the time to make me that screen frame you promised me last winter. If you'll go right over to the

carpenter's shop and have that done by noon I'll tack the cloth on this afternoon. I'll go out and buy it the minute baby goes to sleep.—This room will do splendidly !”

When evening came an artistic dark red screen, with long peacock feathers laid diagonally across it, shut off every suggestion of culinary appointments. The extension table was made its full size and had the piano cover on it, chairs were drawn around it and a student's lamp in the center lighted the room pleasantly. Ivy was twined around the one picture on the wall, an excellent engraving of Bolton Abbey in the olden time. A great vase of chrysanthemums, yellow, white, and pink, brightened one corner of the room, while the baby, who had discovered the commotion in the air and therefore resolutely refused to go to sleep, made another picture, so beautiful that the entire San Benito Chautauqua Circle, which came in almost in a body, declared that there was never anything lovelier in art or story—not even the “starry” little Astyanax of whom Miss Thurston had read at the last meeting.

The Circle had nearly doubled in numbers. The Misses Towner brought a cousin, a sensible young man who was teaching in the country a few miles out of San Benito, but having a pony at his disposal, thought he could attend the meetings of the Circle. Dr. Hall brought two more young men—two of the very ones Miss Thurston had noticed and sighed over as she had glanced at the post-office corner whenever she was on the street in the evening—young men with apparently no occupation but to lean against a building or a lamp post and watch passers-by. Mrs. Fiske brought her husband, still protesting that he would be just “a looker-on in Vienna,” and Christian Leib brought his wife, who, to the surprise of Miss Thurston, was not a German but a tall, slender and rather delicate looking woman with a decided Yankee look and manner. She still further demonstrated her nationality by saying as soon as she was introduced to the company, that she had “always been calculating to do some more reading and now she guessed she'd join the Circle if the rest were agreeable.” There were also several visitors.

The young President made haste to welcome all the newcomers and the Secretary was equally cordial, while Mr. and Mrs. Chapman arranged seats for all and in every way proved themselves as graceful entertainers as even the Fiskes had been.

The roll was called and every member responded. The topics were then called for in regular order, and although the sound of her own voice was something very frightful to Mrs. Brooks, who held topic No. 1, yet she managed to go safely through a little statement in regard to the geography of Greece. Mr. Fowler did up his subject in fine style. Mrs. Fiske had the early inhabitants of Greece for her subject, and told the story of the old Aryan emigrations, and of the way in which the record of their slow journeyings and colonizings had been transmitted by root words destined to be picked out and deciphered ages afterward.

Christian Leib was just a little hampered by a lack of English words with which to tell what he knew about the Spartans, but was duly prompted by his alert wife, who showed very

plainly that she had indeed been a helpmate to him in his resolute struggle with an English text-book.

After the topics were disposed of Miss Thurston called Mr. Leib out again upon the subject of the Greek capability for self-government, and the Circle was greatly pleased with his sturdy ideas of the rights of men and the educating power of freedom.

Then our friend John read his essay upon Solon with considerable embarrassment and a few blunders, but on the whole extremely well. Mr. Chapman moved a vote of thanks to the essayist which was cordially passed, and John felt amply rewarded for his toil, which he frankly confessed, in an aside to Mr. Chapman, had been greater for him than shoeing all the horses in San Benito.

Miss Thurston now produced *The Chautauquan* for October and asked how many had found time for the required reading in the magazine, to which she received rather wavering replies.

"Ah, we must not neglect our magazine," she said briskly.

"We must meet oftener, I think," said Jennie Brooks, and to this there was a universal assent. It was voted to meet every Friday evening; also, at Miss Thurston's suggestion, to devote the last Friday of each month to a review of the readings in *The Chautauquan*. An extra meeting was also planned for the purpose of getting fully caught up with the regular reading, and all promised double work for the next fortnight. The Primer of American Literature was sent for by all present, even the irregular members and onlookers venturing so small an investment as that, and the second Friday evening in November was assigned to this brief outlook over the field of American literature. Biographical sketches of various American authors were given out as themes, each member taking one, and then with music and a little social talk, during which Mrs. Leib and the three new young men joined what the latter persisted in calling privately "the pretty little schoolma'am's club," the circle closed its second meeting.

Everybody present felt stimulated and

uplifted, except possibly the Chapman baby, who at an early stage of the proceedings had dropped off into profound sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

A SHUT-IN CIRCLE.

As Miss Thurston hurried schoolward on a morning soon after this, one of her little pupils slipped her hand into that of the teacher and tripped gaily along beside her. The little tongue was very voluble and soon began to tell its story :

“Oh, Miss Thurston, Willie says he wishes he could be a-a-a-what do you call it?”

“I don’t think I can guess, Susie, unless you tell me some more,” answered the gentle voice ; “who is Willie?”

“Why don’t you know our Willie? Our Willie goes on crutches—you know Willie.”

“Ah, yes, I only didn’t know his name,” and the gentle voice grew more sympathetic. “Does Willie want to be a scholar?”

“No,” answered little Susie soberly. “Poor

Willie never could sit still in school. His back won't let him, you know, and he can't walk very far. Willie wishes—he said so last night when he saw you go by—he wishes he could be a—”

“Chautauquan, is it, Susie?” asked the teacher.

“Yes, ma'am, that's it—sort of a school at home, ain't it, Miss Thurston ?”

“Yes, dearie, that is just it. Does Willie love to read ?”

“Indeed he does, Miss Thurston. He reads and reads, lying down in his hammock chair that papa made for him, and he knows lots more than other folks, but then you know Willie is older than he is big.”

“Yes, Susie, I know ; I've seen Willie at the windows. You tell him I'll come to see him this very next Saturday. How glad we ought to be we can walk and run, Susie! I guess you're a good little sister to Willie. You look to me as if you were. Do you run and wait on poor brother Willie ?”

“When he's nice and good I do,” said

Susie honestly. "Sometimes he's awful cross."

"Who wouldn't be, dearie, if there was so much to be tired about? How pleasant you and I ought to be!" And Miss Thurston and Susie ran up the schoolhouse steps as if on a wager.

Before Saturday she received an application blank which a lady at the last meeting had taken home for an invalid sister, about whom she merely said that "like other sick folks she got dreadfully tired of doing nothing." This blank was filled out with a quaint originality:

What is your full address?

"Miss Sarah Olmstead, San Benito."

Are you married or single?

"Single and satisfied."

What is your age?

"Uncertain. It depends on how I feel."

What is your occupation?

"Trying to find a soft spot in my bed where I have lain for twenty years, and a bright side to my life, which is more difficult."

With what religious denomination are you connected?

"The Church of the Good Endeavor."

Kate Thurston read this little document with care on Saturday morning as she made the package of similar applications ready to send to the State Secretary. Then she went down stairs and asked Mrs. Brooks where Miss Olmstead lived. That good lady was deep in her Saturday's baking, but she paused cheerfully to give explicit directions, with a brief biographical sketch of the poor invalid and also of Willie Kellet, the lame boy :

"Miss Olmstead is kind o' paralyzed ; had a dreadful sickness in the States and took too much doctors' stuff. It kind o' settled in her arms and legs. She lives with her sister and they're good to her, as far as I know, but sickness is dreadful wearin' to everybody. Miss Olmstead is pretty cherk generally speakin', though she has her down spells.—Yes, do go and see her. I wish I wasn't so busy and I'd go along.

"Willie Kellett, 'lame Willie' we all call him, he lives a little this side of the Chapmans', and he's another unfortunate. He's real smart

though, and ingenious, and I know they'll be glad to see you. Folks are so busy in San Benito we don't get around to see our sick neighbors half enough. That's one good thing about Chautauqua; we kind of go when the time comes instead of putting it off and so we get acquainted with each other."

As Miss Thurston walked briskly along the street, which was more like a country road, she overtook one of her pupils, a bright little boy of ten, who was walking by the side of a slender and somewhat bowed over woman. A second glance showed that the little fellow was acting as guide to his companion who was nearly or quite blind.

"Hello, Miss Thurston," he sang out cheerily, "I'm taking grandma over to Aunt Mary's and then I'm going to see the fellows play baseball."

"Good morning, Jimmy," said the teacher, in just as cheerful a tone, "and now tell me your grandmother's name please."

"Grandma," said Jimmy.

"Beckwith," added grandma pleasantly, "and

you are Jimmy's new teacher, I reckon. I'm sure Jimmy has told us enough about you to have me feel acquainted."

And so they fell into easy conversation. Kate found a new friend in this chance acquaintance; a wise, patient, thoughtful woman, whose early lack of education had been so supplemented by the experience and discipline of long life and many sorrows that every line of her face told of refinement and spiritual culture. Kate walked slowly beside her, revealing in every tone and guiding movement her quick warm sympathy, yet without question or word as to her blindness, and the elder woman thanked God for this new sweet voice which had come into her darkened life. When they paused at "Aunt Mary's" gate it was with promises of future walks and talks together.

"Do you love to listen to reading? Of course you do," said Kate, not waiting for an answer.

"Yes, honey," she answered in a soft Southern voice, "yes, better than anything in the world, and I have a great blessing in my son, Jimmy's father, who is most always in the house

and a great reader, especially of the Scriptures."

"I shall love to come to see you if you will let me," said Kate most sincerely as they parted.

The home of the Kelletts was near by and here, as Kate reached the gate, out flew Susie with: "Oh, Miss Thurston, we were watching for you and here you are!" Then, drawing her eagerly in,—"Ma, here's Miss Thurston! Willie, here she is!"

Kate went forward with smiling cordiality, and the poor pale boy, whose face she had often seen looking out wistfully, put his thin hand into hers with unwonted freedom, while the plain, care-worn mother came forward as if she also felt the charm of Kate's simple friendliness and reciprocated it as best she could. The room, which was both kitchen and living-room, was scrupulously clean and orderly, and the lame boy was neat and attractive, with his light brown hair carefully brushed away from a broad white forehead. He had prominent bright blue eyes, and although his features were sharp and thin they were by no means unpleasant. His

smile was really beautiful, Kate thought, as she led him on in a natural way to speak of the morning sunshine which fell over him as he lay near the window in his home-made reclining chair ; how white his teeth were she noted, and how delicate and aristocratic he looked among his brown and sturdy younger brothers, who came in from their play to enjoy this morning call from their teacher. She saluted each one by name and had a pleasant word for each, but gave most of her thoughts and conversation to Willie. He was about eighteen, she judged, but his curved spine made him a good deal shorter than his twelve-year-old brother, so it seemed very natural that Kate should call him "Willie," as they all did.

He had laid down a book as she came in, and she glanced at it.

"Ah, 'Plutarch's Lives !'" she exclaimed with genuine pleasure ; " now that's what I call good reading."

"So do I," answered Willie, smiling his rare smile ; "I like great men—to read about them, I mean. Of course I'd like

better to know them, if they weren't all dead."

"Are they?" asked Miss Thurston doubtfully. "I don't know about that. Whoever is doing his best is a hero, *I* think. There's a chance for us all, you see." But Willie looked incredulous.

"What a convenient book-rest you have!" said Kate, changing the subject adroitly.

"It's Willie's own make," said Mrs. Kellett. "He can do anything with his knife and a piece of soft wood. He made these swinging shelves for his books."

"And this box for me," chimed in Susie, running and bringing out her treasure.

Miss Thurston examined all with genuine admiration. The work was symmetrical and perfect, with a carefulness of finish which showed the true artist.

"Why, we shall have a famous wood carver here in San Benito the first thing we know—a sculptor maybe!" she exclaimed with real enthusiasm, as the smallest boy brought out a little wooden horse, with spirit and grace in every line, from the dilated nostrils to the slender fetlock. "We're not going to let any

genius run to waste here! You must have the right help. I'm going to appoint a committee to attend to this business! And did a little bird tell me you would like to be a Chautauquan?" she added.

"I don't know about the bird," said Willie, the color flushing his white forehead, "but I should."

"Can't you have a sort of family Circle," suggested Kate, "father and mother and you?" And then she remembered that the whole scheme was new to her audience and proceeded to explain it fully.

"We can hardly afford the books," said Mrs. Kellett timidly, "and Mr. Kellett comes home clean tired out every night."

"I'm through with my Greek history and should love to lend it to you," said Kate earnestly, and although the blood ran up over Willie's forehead again, he felt the household poverty too keenly to refuse; besides Kate gave him no chance. "Susie shall go home with me and bring it right down and also *The Chautauquan* for October," she went on.

So it was settled, and with kind hand shakings Kate took her leave. Willie rose from his chair and came to the door to look after her.

"She's just as near an angel as they make 'em," he said, with strong emphasis.

Kate and Susie sped along to Miss Olmstead's abiding place with her sister, Mrs. Sterling. It was a pretty, rose embowered cottage with geraniums and chrysanthemums brightening the borders and almost concealing the inclosing fences. Not a touch of frost had hindered their riotous growth, and the brilliant blossoms brought both Kate and Susie to a delighted standstill, when the door quickly opened and Mrs. Sterling came out to greet them, attired in a sweeping cap and the biggest of gingham aprons. She was the most vigorous of housewives and, after the salutations, opened her mouth to pour forth apologies and explanations, which unhappy tide Kate stemmed with as earnest an overflow of admiration for the flowers. When they went indoors they were ushered at first into the stiffest of cold dark parlors, but afterward when Kate asked for Miss Olmstead,

into an inhabited and more cheerful dining room out of which opened a pleasant bed room, the home of the invalid, Miss Olmstead. As soon as Mrs. Sterling would let them they went on into this bed room and were introduced to the odd looking lady who was imprisoned there. She was fair and rather fleshy, with short curling hair which gave her a youthful look, but her hands which lay almost useless on the snowy bed covering looked shrunken and old. She greeted them with quite a little animation and said, "This is very good of you, Miss Thurston. I expect you'll think I'm a queer subject for your new institution, but I shan't hinder anybody if I can't help. I never broke up a meeting yet!" Her voice was singularly sweet, quite in contrast with the rasping shrillness which characterized Mrs. Sterling's, but Kate instantly discovered under its light tone a ring of pathetic bravery. Here was some one who was wise enough to see that complaining didn't help suffering. So Kate answered in the same strain: "You certainly look very peaceable, Miss Olmstead, but we are so glad to have

people become Chautauquans that we don't ask for any guarantees of good nature." Then, Mrs. Sterling having asked to be excused, Kate drew a chair near the bedside where she could be seen easily as well as heard, which she intuitively knew was the pleasant thing to do, and they fell into brisk conversation.

The room was in perfect order but the flaring paper on the wall, the great set figures on the carpet, the bareness and dreariness everywhere, were enough to oppress a well person, and Kate thought with a shudder, "What if I were lying here, with these surroundings!"

Miss Olmstead meanwhile was watching Miss Thurston's glowing face and thinking: "How little you can know of my weariness!"

"Do you sit up at all?" asked Kate, when Miss Olmstead alluded again to her non-combative principles.

"Oh, I used to be hoisted out into a rocking chair once in a while years ago, but it's such a fuss and for so little while, and I've taken to growing fat and heavy—perfectly ridiculous for an invalid, you know—and I'm such a lift, and

John—Mr. Sterling—is away from home all day, on the railroad, not even at home Sundays, and so I've got into the way of lying curled up here like a caterpillar—Ugh, how I hate the things ! One has made itself into a roll outside the window there on the sash."

"It will be a butterfly before long," said Kate slowly, laying her warm hand on the wasted one near her, as she asked :

"Can you manage a book with any sort of comfort?"

"Well, I'm not much of a bookworm if I am a caterpillar," confessed the invalid. "A newspaper or a magazine sister Ellen sometimes fixes up against a pillow and I manage to get the leaves turned if Ellen is within call, but she's such a worker, and she does hate California dust so. I declare I think she puts out enough from this house every year to make a state like Rhode Island!"

They both laughed merrily, but little Susie suddenly found her tongue.

"She'd ought to have a book-rest, like Willie's, oughtn't she, Miss Thurston?"

"Indeed she ought, and a little sister like Susie to turn the leaves," said Miss Thurston.

"I've never seen such a thing," said Miss Olmstead, "tell me how it works, please."

So Kate explained. "If you had one," she went on, "you could read aloud while Mrs. Sterling sews, and she could sit near enough to turn leaves."

"So I could," said Miss Olmstead, brightening. "I'd be glad to pay for one. That's something I have to be thankful for—I have a little income. My father left me a farm in Iowa, so I shouldn't be entirely dependent, and it's a comfort to pay my way always. Then I have a little left over, and as I'm not very extravagant about dress—don't even take a fashion book or care anything about being stylish—I can treat myself to making a present once in a while. I'll make myself a present this time, and not wait for Christmas either."

"The very thing," cried Kate joyfully. "And did you never hear about a machine for lifting sick people,—a couple of rings firmly fastened in the ceiling and then a system of pulleys and

ropes so that one could be swung in a stout sheet or blanket into an upright position and out of bed to an easy chair? There is such an arrangement, Miss Olmstead, and you must surely have it. I'll find out all about it and report in a fortnight."

And now the whistles began to blow for noon and Mrs. Sterling came in to urge the visitors to stay to lunch, but Miss Thurston felt she must not disappoint Mrs. Brooks, who always made an extra effort on Saturday noon in her favorite boarder's behalf, so with cordial leave-takings she and Susie departed. As they hurried homeward Miss Thurston said, "Now, Susie tell Willie to make the very nicest book-rest he can. Make it of red wood and polish it just like his own, and he can pay for his Chautauqua books, don't you see?"

Susie chattered and chattered till they reached Mrs. Brooks' house, without winning quite as many replies as usual from her teacher, who seemed unusually busy with her own thoughts. She was saying to herself: "How wonderfully things seem to match in this world!"

Who can believe there is any hap-hazard?"

She ran up to her room for the history and *The Chautauquan* and gave them into Susie's hands. "Now open your mouth and shut your eyes," she said, dropping a chocolate cream into Susie's clean little red lips, "and don't forget about the book-rest."

"No indeed," said Susie, and she didn't.

A week later the young President of the Chautauquans kept her promise to blind Mrs. Beckwith. She set out early in the short November afternoon and dropped in a moment to see Willie Kellett whom she found alone and whittling the beautiful book-rest with a zeal that made bright red spots in his pale cheeks.

"Ah, Willie," she said, "don't make that too fine or it will be worth more than the Chautauqua books. And how goes on the Kellett Chautauqua Circle with the Greek history?"

"Splendid," answered Willie; "I've read it all through, and father and mother are pretty well along. Father reads it aloud and mother and the boys listen. Tom and Henry like it too; and the magazine is fine."



"Bravo!" cried Kate. "I'll be in again in a day or two. Good-by."

At the Beckwith's Miss Thurston found a cordial greeting. The family consisted of father and mother, two daughters who were at the State Normal School in San José, a boy of fourteen who was one of Kate's pupils, "Jimmy," the youngest of the household, and "Grandma Beckwith," as she was universally known. The boys, as grandma said on her first introduction, had not failed to sound the praises of the new teacher and grandma, too, had told of her morning acquaintance.

Mr. Beckwith was a mild-mannered man of slow speech and Southern accent, a Tennessean it proved, as the conversation went on, while Mrs. Beckwith was a Missourian of large figure and forcible style. The family living room was large and pleasant with an open fire burning in a big old-fashioned fire-place, though the afternoon was warm. Then Kate noticed that the father was rheumatic and could hardly rise from his chair, so that he seemed almost as old and infirm as his blind mother. Between the

two there seemed an unusual bond of sympathy which showed in a thousand small ways that the quick eye of the visitor discerned. It was also just as evident that Mrs. Beckwith's care of the two was more vigorous than tender. She spoke of them as "maw" and "paw," explained their ailments with painful minuteness, and administered medicine to "paw" with slightly ostentatious manner and much shaking of the bottle. Finally she apologized for the rather careless look of the room by saying that she could hardly ever get a chance to "red up" the house with two folks settin' 'round in the way all the time.

Kate came to the rescue with quick kindness : "You remind me of my own dear father, Mr. Beckwith," she said; "he too was a good deal of an in-door man for a long time from an accident ; we thought we could not keep house without his big easy-chair. We wheeled it where ever we were at work. I hope you are not always a prisoner."

"No," said Mr. Beckwith, "I have a pretty bad spell every fall and sometimes again in the

spring, but often I git around quite spry."

"There's one good thing that comes with my son's sick spells," said grandma, "he reads aloud ever so much to me and it helps him to forget his pains, and me to forget—" she hesitated—"how long the days are."

Kate had noted when she first came in an open Bible on a stand near Mr. Beckwith, and had thought, "Here is the secret of the refinement and gentle speech of mother and son," and now she said warmly, "I see Mr. Beckwith knows where to find the best of reading."

"Paw was a preacher back in the States, in Tennessee," explained Mrs. Beckwith, "a Baptist preacher; not reg'lar, but kind of occasional; he held meetin's in schoolhouses and 'tended funerals. He's done a powerful sight of good," and she looked quite wifely in her pride and appreciation. Kate felt drawn toward her for the first time, and responded quickly with: "I can well believe it, Mrs. Beckwith, and I think he isn't through with doing good by any means. I think there are a

good many families who would be thankful for somebody to read aloud to them."

"It's the blessing of my life," said grandma fervently.

"Paw's a leetle too much interested in the prophecies to suit me," said Mrs. Beckwith with honest frankness. "If we could kind o' have a change from Job and Dan'l and Ezek'l I'd think more of the readin' and expoundin'. I git all beat out, as it is."

Before Kate had time to recover from this Mr. Beckwith turned toward her, his face quite aglow with animation and entirely unmindful of his wife's criticisms :

"Did you ever read the prophecies of Job in the light of science and discovery, Miss Thurston ?" he asked.

"No, I don't know that I have," she answered.

"Well, I'd like to show you how he prophesied about the steam engine," he said excitedly, as he turned the leaves of the Bible till he came to the mystical description.

Poor Kate was doomed. The enthusiast was fairly started and on he went. Fortunately he

did not demand much assent, and Kate's "ahs" and "indeeds" and "do you think so's" seemed entirely satisfactory. The argument with much digressive illustration proceeded. It took half an hour to reach the stackpipe, another before the prophetic engine was, so to speak, ready to have the fire started. Kate's one thought most of the time had been how to switch this engine off the track. She had taken pleasure solely in one thing, the absorbed attention of the blind mother who kept her face turned toward her son with affection and devoted faith in every feature. Kate knew that nothing is more corrective to hobby riding than the introduction of a new steed, and she made haste to trot out her beloved Chautauqua.

"Oh, Mr. Beckwith," she said, "you are so interested in history and science, have you heard about our new society for studying these things? No? Do let me tell you about it." And now it was her turn to be eloquent; so much so that all three of her auditors were converted. All were more than pleased, Mr. Beckwith and his mother with real intellectual

anticipation, and the wife hopeful of a reprieve from the excess of prophetic explanation. They were people of comfortable means, owing to a fortunate investment in real estate, and Kate felt sure they would have the leisure and the interest to make good Chautauquans.

"Of course we can't get out to attend any meetings," said Mrs. Beckwith, "we're such a poor helpless lot."

"Never mind that," said Kate cheerily, "be a 'Home Circle'; that's one of the very best kind. I'll send you applications by Jimmy on Monday." And she hurried away just to look in one minute at Miss Olmstead before going home. She found her in rather a forlorn mood, but Kate cheered her with talk of the book-rest which would be done in a day or two and which could stand by the bed and be lowered or raised at pleasure, or it could be unscrewed and only the top part used, placing it in any position on the bed. "You can hold a long paper knife in your right hand and manage to turn the leaves without raising your arm," said Kate suddenly,

"I do believe you can. I notice you can hold a fan."

Tears sprang up in the poor woman's eyes. "How you do think of things!" she exclaimed. "Now, Ellen and I haven't any 'gumption,' and we had kind of *given up*."

"Never do that, whatever happens," said Kate, with warning, uplifted finger, "but we're going to have you up, and in a wheeled chair, and out of this room!"

"My occupation will be gone then," said Miss Olmstead with mock solemnity. "For years and years I've counted the bouquets on this wall —just nine hundred and seventy-two there are —and then the buds, and then the leaves,—Oh my! Oh my! What do you suppose I'd *do* in another room?"

"Well, you'll feel like a butterfly instead of a caterpillar," said Kate, "and you're going to be the very life and soul and center of the 'Shut-in Chautauqua Circle!' It has all come to me in a minute. Every month at least, Willie Kellett and his mother shall be brought down here, and Mr. Beckwith and grandma shall

come too whenever his rheumatism will let him, and Mrs. Beckwith will come and take care of you all and prescribe for you, and I'll look in (it shall be on Saturday afternoons from two to four) so, as I said, I'll look in and help keep the ball rolling, and report the big Circle and its doings, for your criticism. I foresee this is going to be a very select, *recherché* affair and we shall stand in terrible awe of you ! I can think of ever so many things more but I'll stop because I'm out of breath and it's growing dark. Now good-by, and see if all this doesn't come true."

"Heaven bless you for a bird of good omen !"

said Miss Olmstead.

As Kate wended home, her busy heart, always "at leisure from itself," built innumerable airy castles to house her new ideas, and, as time proved, far more of these ephemeral structures stood the test of wind and weather than is generally the case.

The book-rest was a great success, and the long delicate leaf-turner which accompanied it worked admirably. The "Elevator," as Miss Olmstead named her friend of the ropes and

pulleys, did all that Miss Thurston had promised, and enabled the poor lady to desert the ranks of the wholly bedridden. By husbanding her strength she found that she could hold the monthly reception which Miss Thurston had predicted. The Beckwiths got out their comfortable low phaeton and drove to this afternoon meeting, picking up Willie on the way. Two or three more "shut-in" people heard of this novel Circle and on application were made very welcome. One of these was a maiden lady who had greatly "enjoyed poor health," and to whom it proved a real benefit to have a new subject of thought. Before the first of January Mrs. Beckwith drew Miss Thurston aside and told her that she'd had a blessed rest from them Hebrew prophets for three whole weeks !

Kate wrote a long letter to her father at Christmas telling him all about it : "I believe it is the best thing I ever did, papa dear," she wrote at the close, "and I never should have done it in the world if I had not loved you so, and learned so many lessons of sympathy beside your dear wheeled chair. *You* are the real

inspirer of my lovely 'Shut-in Chautauqua Circle,' and often, papa, it seems to me it almost pays to be a 'Shut-in'—it lifts one so above one's environment."

CHAPTER V.

A CHAUTAUQUA "BOOM" AND A SET-BACK.

BY the last of November the San Benito Circle had caught up with the rest of the Chautauqua world, and had that brisk and confident air which people always have who are abreast of the times. The meeting devoted to American literature had been by far the most brilliant and successful of all the meetings yet held. It was a subject about which everybody had a little knowledge and a great deal of interest. The sketches of Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, and Lowell were so good, Miss Thurston's essay upon early American literature was so graphic and well illustrated, and Mrs. Fiske's paper upon Emerson so fine, that the critical Mr. Fiske got upon his feet and congratulated the Circle upon its literary ability, and Mrs. Chapman moved that the Circle keep the Chautauqua

“Memorial Days” by giving public entertainments when these articles could be amplified and reproduced. This was unanimously carried, and a “Bryant Day” was arranged for the early part of December, since the regular day had already passed. The evening program was admirably arranged with essays and recitations brightened by some charming music, and San Benito gave the Circle an excellent audience and much appreciation.

Now set in a real Chautauqua “boom.” Everybody in San Benito had heard of the Circle and its wonderful doings. The weekly *San Benito Star* had a column on its local page with display headings and lavish rhetoric about “Our Chautauqua Circle,” which it averred was patronized by all the literati in town. The editor and the compositor both joined the Circle and proved valuable additions. It resulted in much free advertising of the proceedings.

No parlor but Mrs. Fiske’s would hold the ever-growing Circle, so it was decided to meet in the schoolhouse. Old people and young people flocked to the meetings and Mrs. Fiske

was kept busy sending off applications. Some of these new members joined from genuine desire to "improve their minds," as the good old phrase expresses it. Others thought it was a new-fangled mode of becoming learned without much effort, and this met a long felt want. Others still joined because it was the fashion. There were a few young gentlemen who affirmed boldly that they joined because there were so many "nice" girls in it, and it really looked as if several young women joined in order to meet these same young men. The President would have been quite overwhelmed by her responsibilities if she had not had such excellent helpers. Mrs. Fiske was like a sister to her and between them they devised the scheme of having a new teacher for each new book. They also branched off a little from the prescribed course and took the "Preparatory Greek Course in English" of the preceding year, feeling that it fitted in with the history too well to be omitted. Miss Thurston having been over the book a year previous was able to lead them through it with great ease, and Homer and

Xenophon became household words in San Benito.

But when Dr. Hall consented to be Superintendent during the reading of Dr. Wythe's "Vegetable Biology" it was directly seen that there would be no falling off in the method of teaching. The study was right in his favorite line of work. He had a microscope of rare excellence and was an enthusiastic microscopist. He could also use the blackboard well, and as the class watched his quick crayon work or looked through his microscope at his carefully prepared specimens illustrative of their subject of study, there was if anything an increase of interest and appreciation. Miss Thurston had secretly dreaded this book more than any other in the course, knowing very little of the subject herself, and fearing that others would find it hopelessly dull and difficult, but all her fears vanished before Dr. Hall's first clear, scholarly presentation of the subject. The young women of the Circle became especially devoted to amœba, and more than one was seen during the very wet month of January peering and

poking into wayside pools in search of infusoria and other objects which would surely have been quite disgusting to her save for the new interest in biology developed by the attractive young professor. It was truly wonderful how well those lessons were learned and how the scientific mania spread among the fair daughters of San Benito.

If Dr. Hall was an inspiration to the Circle in January, Mr. Chapman was ready to be no less helpful and capable in February when they took hold of that unrivaled book, "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation." It was the first religious book which they had studied together and many looked at it with dread if not aversion, for strange as it may seem, the subject which should be of supreme importance was the one in San Benito least thought of, least understood, and least appreciated.

It followed that there was a perceptible falling off in the attendance of the Circle. The irregular members disappeared *en masse* and of the regular members there was a conspicuous failure to appear. The young men especially, stayed

away except two or three. Yet Mr. Chapman had planned the work with great care. Topics had been carefully distributed to call out individual thought, and not only early Hebrew but Egyptian and Assyrian history had been considered as throwing light on the subject in hand. Mr. Chapman's own preparation had been thorough and he was a bright and thoughtful man, yet it was painfully evident that only a few intended to put themselves in the way of grasping the fine, strong, logical reasoning of the book, embodied in language always worthy of the theme,—the most scholarly religious argument since the days of Bishop Butler and his immortal "Analogy."

Everything had hitherto gone prosperously with the Circle. The timid members had grown quite courageous and several of them had surprised both their neighbors and themselves with their capabilities. The musical talent of the Circle had multiplied with its growth, and not only the Chautauqua songs were rendered with spirit and enthusiasm, but every meeting was enlivened by some pleasant solo or duet, for

which the little school organ furnished a passable accompaniment. There were several who read and recited well, and Miss Thurston had also brought in some of her older pupils for special recitations. She had herself taken charge of the evenings devoted to *The Chautauquan* and had succeeded in making them equal to any in interest. The holiday season had come and gone and occasioned only a brief intermission in the meetings, and January with its rains had been bravely met and conquered by Dr. Hall and his disciples. Lone women had lighted their lanterns and trudged along the black country roads on the darkest nights to attend their beloved "Chautauqua," until the dauntlessness of "Chautauqua women" had become proverbial. Traveling shows and peripatetic lecturers and musicians had learned not to come to San Benito hoping to get an audience from the "upper circles" on Friday nights. Even the irrepressible young folks had their parties and candy pulls on some other evening. Nothing had really gone counter to the triumphant progress of the movement until now there

was this ominous decline. Poor Kate carried rather a sad and heavy heart up into her little room after the first meeting in February. Her school work had been hard all the winter on account of the large number and great variety in ages of her pupils, but the Chautauqua Circle had been a delightful change and rest. Now if this was going to drag! She sat down and thought it over in her usual way. It must not be so, she decided, if for no other reason than to save the good minister's feelings; but, chiepest of all, because the very members of the Circle who needed to know more of the Bible and its claims were those who were now absenting themselves from the meetings. A plan seemed to suggest itself to her for she soon laid her tired head upon her pillow and went peacefully to sleep.

The next day was Saturday and the gentle California rain was descending with a quiet persistence highly pleasing to agriculturists, but Kate Thurston never let a California rain interfere with her plans. She was born in Maine!

Equipped with gossamer waterproof, rubbers

and umbrella, she sallied forth directly after breakfast and went to her friend Mrs. Fiske.

"Why, Katie, what in the world brings you out this morning?" exclaimed Mrs. Fiske as she greeted her at the door, having caught sight of her through the windows and rushed to welcome her.

"Oh, just 'she talks away,' as little Tom Towner calls it," answered Kate, as she shed her dripping wraps in the porch.

"Well, come in thou stormy petrel and visit this croaking raven," said Mrs. Fiske hoarsely but gaily, and she made haste to explain how she had not been out herself on the previous evening because she was fighting with aconite and belladonna 'the prevailing influenza.

Kate sat down in a luxuriant sleepy hollow chair by the cozy fireside and told her troubles first and then her conclusion.

"We women must 'make an effort,' like the renowned Mrs. Chick. We can persuade these young men to come back if we go to them personally. I'll take care of certain ones, and I have in my mind the right girls to look after

certain others, but, dear Mrs. Fiske, you must see Dr. Hall," and the bright color ran up over her face as she went earnestly on: "I have been so sorry in the last month to find that while he studies nature with such infinite pleasure he does not seem to go higher than nature."

"I'm not so sure that I am the right one," said Mrs. Fiske, "and you see I'm a prisoner, but I'll promise to do the best I can. You are an irresistible girl," she added, as Kate rose to go, "but don't stay out in the rain any longer to-day. Go home and let Providence take care of things."

But Kate had a way of helping Providence. Her next stopping place was at Colonel Dobson's, whom she found at home and in his most amiable mood. He had fallen out of the Circle, much as he liked to lead a popular movement, because some of the young men who joined the class in November had an unpleasant way of calling him out on points of which he was profoundly ignorant, just to hear him stammer and see him grow red in the face. But now he felt

immensely flattered to have Miss Thurston coming after him as if he were such a consequential person that he couldn't be spared, and he promised her that he would be on hand after this and he would also look up certain others and bring them to the next meeting.

The Colonel had ushered Miss Thurston into the family room where for the first time she met Mrs. Dobson, who was quite an invalid and a much overshadowed individual. Kate had such ready sympathy that the call was prolonged into a friendly visit and Mrs. Dobson's name was added before Kate left, to the growing list of the "Shut-in Circle."

The zealous little President next pursued her way to Mrs. Chapman's where she brightened the somewhat discouraged minister and his wife with her honest praise of their helpfulness to the Circle.

"Do not think of this little declension," she urged ; "it is nothing but the seriousness of the subject which has driven away some of our friends. I am sure we can win them back."

"You know Dr. Hall has no settled religious

belief," Mr. Chapman said, "and his influence is great. We can hardly expect him to come and that will deter others."

"It is a great pity," said Kate regretfully, "but of course I cannot speak to him,—probably no one here could have much influence with him."

She did not see the glance exchanged between the minister and his wife, so her blushes were spared.

Her next calling place was the Towners' pretty home, and here she found cordial allies. Flora and Lizzie were good girls, not overstocked with talent or learning, but pretty enough to be charming, and with right ideas in all essential things. They were general favorites in San Benito, so when they promised Miss Kate that they would see their cousin who was one of the delinquents, and a certain other young man who was well known to be Miss Flora's humble servant, it was morally certain that these youths would appear at the next meeting.

It was nearly noon when Kate turned her steps homeward. She had not gone far when a

quick step came up behind her and a pleasant manly voice bade her good morning in a way that sounded very cheery, adding : "Can't we make one umbrella do for two? I'm going on beyond Mrs. Brooks' a little way."

So almost before Kate knew it she was walking beside Dr. Hall, relieved of her umbrella, and with nothing to do but to pick her way along the sloppy sidewalk and think how she could say to him what was uppermost in her heart. She had been helping Providence this morning, now Providence was evidently helping her!

She listened for a few moments to his merry comments on California weather and San Benito sidewalks, and joined in laughter over their unavailing efforts to keep side by side. Then she made a brave venture :

"You were not at our Circle last night."

"No, I'm full of other work just now," he replied.

"Ah, that was the reason, was it?" she asked with genuine relief. "I feared you did not feel so much interest in the subject of our study."

"Well, I don't," he answered frankly. "I like to study things I can see and understand. About these religious matters I confess I'm an agnostic."

"You have of course given them a great deal of thought before abandoning them," she said quietly, as if this were a foregone conclusion.

"No, I can hardly say that," he confessed.

She let him make his own inference, and after a little silence talked of other things, but as they parted at Mrs. Brooks' door she said very earnestly: "I hope you will read this little book which the Circle is taking up. It is no common book, I assure you."

"I will surely read whatever you recommend," he answered gallantly, standing on the lower steps of the little porch and looking up at her with evident admiration. The rain curled her hair in soft, moist rings about her forehead. Her eyes were clear and honest. All the lines of her face told of refined thought and womanly sweetness. Her cheeks flushed with her walk and with the excitement of this little encounter, were just the color of the Hermosa roses which

hung in heavy clusters above her head, and Dr. Hall's words were no empty compliment. In the depth of his heart he thought, "Here is a woman worth pleasing," and he went that very afternoon into San Benito's one little book store and bought "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation."

When the clock in his office struck twelve that night he was still diligently reading it.

CHAPTER VI.

WOMANLY WISDOM.

THE indefatigable young teacher made her Saturday afternoon's work as effectual as her morning's had been, and before the next meeting of the Circle had seen each lady member and pressed her into the service. The consequence was that all the powers of feminine persuasiveness were brought to bear upon the young men of San Benito, and when Mr. Chapman took his place at the teacher's desk on the second Friday evening of February he was greeted by a full house. It had been made one of the standing rules of the society to respond to the roll call with a brief quotation upon the subject in hand, and texts of Scripture illustrating the Moral Law were selected as the proper quotations for this week. It is safe to say a good many people in San Benito

committed to memory a Bible text that week who had not done such a thing for years.

The irresistible logic of the little book they were studying had its legitimate effect. It arrested attention, stimulated thought, confirmed faith, answered doubts, cleared up mysteries, and gave to every candid mind enlightenment. It resulted in the formation of a large Bible class which met every Sunday afternoon and was attended by many who had never before given these great themes any thoughtful study. Young men, like Dr. Hall, for the first time took up the Bible as they would any other book, with a spirit of honest inquiry, and the result was a deep and wide-spread religious interest.

One of the new young men members proved to be quite an athlete and very bashfully and reluctantly led the Circle the week in which was read "How to Get Strong." It was a fortunate thing for him too, as he was out of employment and now was induced to form a gymnastic class, which paid his way till he found other occupation.

The Circle had no more serious backslidings that winter. It held a membership of nearly forty throughout the Chautauqua year.

Last of the books came the "Stories from English History." It was voted by all not so much a study as an entertainment. Mrs. Chapman sat in the teacher's chair in May and June and her duties were made delightful. The Circle ran with wonderful smoothness. The shyest members had learned to answer questions in audible voices, and many had even grown bold enough to ask them. Miss Thurston had the rare gift of educating—drawing out—people. It was most encouraging to timid souls to have their half-fledged ideas met promptly by her cheerful and warm, "that is true," or "that is suggestive," or "let us all remember that thought;" and often she caught quickly a blundering statement or answer, and clothing it in her own clear words she would repeat it soon after with the graceful reference, "as Mr. Thompson says," or "as Mr. Leib suggests."

Through all her teaching and guiding ran her charming way of saying "we," which John

Thompson had characterized so long before as "nice." It was not art but genuine sympathy. She had been a student at the State Normal School and had known and revered Professor Henry B. Norton. Upon her as upon hundreds of other young students he had made a life-long impression. No one who appreciated him or his teaching could ever smile superciliously at ignorance or stupidity. A heavenly pity, a sweet faith in the possibilities of the least gifted, and a Christ-like brotherliness toward the lowliest human being, were the chief characteristics of this great and good teacher. Kate Thurston had caught the inspiration of his life. Her quick tears had flowed not once or twice only as she heard him greet the crude and perhaps even irrelevant answer of a dull pupil with: "Yes, there is something in that idea." It was her one great desire now to exemplify this same helpful spirit.

These San Benito Chautauquans, however, surprised themselves and their neighbors with their ability. John Thompson affirmed that there were more "talents" lying around San

Benito "hid in napkins" before Miss Thurston came than there ever were in "old Judee," and there were many who agreed with him.

It certainly required an immense amount of tact and energy to coax the maiden essay or speech out of the average member, but the effort brought courage, and courage soon grew into self-possession and fearlessness.

One of the incidental advantages of the Circle was the practical grammatical knowledge which its members gained. A critic, generally Mr. Fiske, took impartial note of all failures, either in pronunciation or syntax, and faithfully reported them at the close of the evening. As a result everybody's speech was improved. Mrs. Brooks by heroic efforts learned to put a final *g* on most of her imperfect participles, and Christian Leib nearly paralyzed his tongue with his determined work over our *w*'s and *th*'s.

The "Shut-in Circle" moved forward with no jarring. Its members were not nearly so dependent on each other as in the other Circle. If a down pour from the sky or a "down spell" from within hindered one of Miss Olmstead's

"receptions" no one was at all discouraged. They were all of them used to failure and disappointment where the outer world was concerned, and the various little family circles, which were the "wheels within the wheel," kept on their steadfast way. When they did have a meeting it was sure to be bright with Miss Olmstead's originality, quaint with Willie Kellett's fancies, imaginative with Mr. Beckwith's philosophy, and heavenly with his mother's "sweetness and light." When Miss Thurston met with them, as she often did, they always felt as if a breeze, pure, reviving, and odorous as a breath from a garden, had swept through their somewhat nerveless, valetudinarian air.

In a hundred ways the young teacher found her Chautauqua Circles self-rewardful. The schoolroom showed the growing intelligence of the pupils' homes. A perceptible brightening of young wits grew out of the new atmosphere, for parents who were Chautauquans took far greater interest in their children's education and so encouraged both them and their teacher.

There was but one opinion in San Benito as to Miss Thurston and her work. There had never been such a teacher among them, and they were not slow in perceiving and acknowledging it. From all quarters there came to the teacher earnest words of praise and urgent invitations to continue her work among them another year, all of which filled her heart with thankfulness.

The school closed the last of May with an evening entertainment in which all the students great and small acquitted themselves most creditably. Little black Pete covered himself with glory by his capital recitation of "How Persimmons Saved the Baby," and one of the young Spanish girls under the teacher's supervision gave an excellent description of "Life in Pueblo in the Good Old Times." Everywhere could be seen the guiding hand of the true educator bringing out the individuality of each pupil.

The evening exercises were over; the last pair of small arms had given Miss Thurston a fervent embrace; the last sweet young pleader had

charged her to be sure and come back next fall, and Kate, with shadow and sunshine in her heart and face, gathered up her few remaining personal effects and stood ready to lock the door as soon as her faithful friend John Thompson had put out the lights. Martha and Jennie Brooks were waiting for her, but some one else was waiting, too, and the girls very considerately took young Thompson's proffered escort and moved on.

"Let me take your books and parcels, Miss Thurston," said Dr. Hall, and so they too walked homeward.

The young trustee spoke some warm words of commendation in regard to the year's work in the school and then added: "I am commissioned by the Chautauquans to tell you that you will please make no plans for going away till we've had our last Round Table, and that will be held to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" echoed Kate in surprise.

"Yes; we're growing very independent of our President, and, without her knowledge or consent, have planned a picnic out in Madrone

Cañon, where we're to have our final Round Table, gypsy fashion, with sundry unusual accompaniments, such as refreshments followed by toasts, and nobody knows what other festivity. And I'm also to tell you," he went on gaily, "that you are strictly forbidden to feel any care or responsibility in the affair."

"Did they tell you to ask for my resignation?" she inquired demurely.

"No," he laughed, "that really wasn't mentioned. It's to be a very temporary abdication of your prerogatives."

"Well," said Kate, "I think I'll have to stay, and I'll try to be humble and unobtrusive, yet without any airs of being discrowned; but I'm glad it will make only one day's delay with me, for like the soldier in the poet's story

Great is the longing that I have
To see my mother."

"I have still another commission," said the Doctor. "Indeed I feel quite like a Minister Plenipotentiary or an Ambassador Extraordinary or some other high envoy."

"I wish I could step up on a stump or

something to make the scene more effective," said Kate.

"Oh, don't disconcert me," begged her friend, "or I may forget something of great importance. The Board of School Trustees request me formally to invite you to return in September, and, with an increased salary and an assistant if you desire one, again to take charge of our public school."

Miss Thurston paused in the starlight and with much show of dignity made a low bow : "I will take the offer under consideration," she said, "and you will be kind enough to convey that answer with my profound thanks to the honorable body which you represent."

And then after a little, Dr. Hall spoke with entire seriousness : "I am not going to let you slip away, Miss Thurston, without saying just a word to you of my personal indebtedness."

"Don't, I beg of you," she pleaded ; "I have done nothing."

"Yes, you have, more than you know," he went on. "You have taught me that life is worth living ; yes, and more than this, you have

taught me how to live. I am no longer walking in darkness but in a growing light, and I must speak to you of this for I think,"—he almost faltered, "that you will care."

They were at the gate and she gave him her hand with frank cordiality. "I am more than glad, Dr. Hall," she said, and although he could but dimly see her face he felt the sweet earnestness of her words; and then they said good night.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROUND TABLE IN THE CAÑON.

“WHAT is so rare as a day in June?” asks the poet. That depends upon where it is. If it is in California there is no uncertainty about it. The sun rises in unclouded splendor. No thunderstorm lurks just beyond the western horizon; no ominous sultriness is in the air. The care free picnicker puts no provisos in his invitations and no umbrellas are included in his preparations. Our Chautauquans packed their lunch baskets and engaged their omnibuses without once looking at the sky or consulting the almanac, and the morning of the eventful day greeted them with its usual calm beauty.

It was a busy morning at the parsonage, for the three little Chapmans were all going with papa and mamma in the good phaeton, which of

late years had apparently evolved a sort of rudimentary front seat to accommodate little Robin and Annie, who gaily occupied it on all the family excursions, sitting with their happy faces toward their parents, while baby Ned rode alternately on everybody's lap, or stood between papa's knees and drove with tremendous energy and ostentation the steady old horse.

Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were up with the sun, and though every possible arrangement had been made over night, yet it was nine o'clock before the house was in fair leaving order, the last shade down, the last crazy little foot made to hold still long enough for the shoe-buttoning process, and the last cooky tucked under the lunch basket cover where it could easily be abstracted for little Ned's undeferrable appetite. The tired young mother at last tied her own pretty white mull-trimmed hat beneath a flushed face and with warm and trembling hands. She was tired to the very verge of exasperation, when a bearded face suddenly dropped down between her and the glass, hindering the tying process by so much as a whole

minute, while the voice she loved best told her that she didn't look a day older than on her wedding day and was a thousand times dearer. It was a wonderful tonic !

Only a block away the Fiskes were taking their usual leisurely breakfast, discussing the morning paper between bits of muffin and sips of coffee. Then Mrs. Fiske attired herself in the daintiest of picnic costumes, remembering to the minutest particular not only all the charming accessories to her toilet but a dozen little devices of various kinds for the comfort and entertainment of her friends, not omitting a book or two with marked selections for reading. The man brought the well-groomed horse and shining carriage to the door and then helped the maid bring out the generous hamper of provisions which he packed with sundry smaller bundles in the box of the buggy. Then Mr. and Mrs. Fiske stepped in and tucked the linen duster carefully around them, every arrangement complete, from the perfectly gloved hands which held the reins to the soft écrù parasol of the fair lady. One would say

here was bliss unalloyed, but just as they were starting, the minister's plain vehicle went by with its overflowing load. There was a cordial exchange of salutations, and Mrs. Fiske, whom even little Ned recognized as a special friend, leaned forward to toss oranges and blow kisses to the little Chapmans. Then she gave a long sigh as she settled herself again in the carriage. "Oh, Charlie," she said, and her soft blue eyes were full of tears, "there go the very happiest people in San Benito."

The Brooks household was also astir betimes, and Miss Thurston, notwithstanding the interdict which had been laid upon her, managed to make several small plans for the benefit of her Chautauquans. Mrs. Brooks' chief anxiety centered in the ample lunch basket. Chickens and tongue, pickles and sandwiches, cake and pie, butter and sugar, and coffee and tea must all go in.

"Dear Mrs. Brooks," expostulated Kate, "we never can eat such a load of provisions," but Mrs. Brooks was hospitably resolute.

"Think of the children there'll be along, and

the drivers, and such men as Mr. Leib and our John who're used to having their heartiest meal at noon," she replied, as she packed and repacked the varied contents of her pails and baskets.

Martha and Jennie Brooks were in a condition of subdued excitement very pleasant to look upon. A holiday of such pleasure as this was a rare treat to the pale young dressmakers. As to John Thompson he was as irrepressible as a schoolboy on the Fourth of July. He appeared at breakfast in his very new Sunday suit, fairly shining from the thoroughness of his ablutions, and devoted himself from that time on to ostensible helpfulness, but so frequently did it result in hindrance that he received more scolding than gratitude. He was finally started out by Miss Thurston to see if the list of Chautauquans given to the omnibus men was complete, and in this way his superfluous energy was turned into a new channel.

Young Fowler was too dignified for such antics as Thompson was guilty of, but he too evidently felt the pervading exhilaration;

indeed the whole atmosphere of San Benito tingled with it, and three fuller omnibuses of people upon pleasure bent never rolled towards Madrone Cañon. Miss Thurston rode with her friends of the Brooks household in one of the omnibuses. She had received a very polite invitation early in the morning to accept another mode of conveyance, but the small boy who brought the note carried back to its somewhat chagrined and disappointed writer as kind a reply saying that she felt she really belonged for the day to this small public and could not distribute herself satisfactorily, except by going to the Cañon with one omnibus and returning with another.

So Dr. Hall brought out Willie Kellett comfortably ensconced in cushions, and with the red spots in his cheeks larger and his eyes brighter than Kate had ever seen them. She could hardly keep her tears back as she sat beside him on the improvised couch of boughs and cushions which eager hands spread for him and from which he looked up with deep quiet happiness at the lovely forest scenery.



All the Beckwiths came in their own conveyance, with Mr. Beckwith driving and feeling quite "spry" in the warm June sunshine. "Grandma," who was always timid about riding, yielded to the temptation of the day and as she gently said, decided to ride by "faith and not by sight" just that one day at any rate.

The Cañon was a beautiful mountain range some six or eight miles eastward of the town and a favorite resort of picnickers. The road leading to it was finely graded and the horses trotted briskly along in apparently as good spirits as the Chautauquans. In the omnibuses there was the usual telling of stories and merry overflow of small talk, with that easily provoked and contagious laughter which betokens good fellowship.

"We are acting like big school children out for a holiday," said Mrs. Brooks half deprecatingly.

"So we do," said Christian Leib, "and so we do well; we are not half children enough here in America, I think." He had brought his two sturdy little sons along, in spite of Mrs. Leib's

fears that they wouldn't "behave themselves," and it was pleasant indeed to see what genial comradery there was between the father and the boys.

The young Chautauquans had very naturally gravitated towards one omnibus and the family people to the others. Kate was with the latter and felt far more at home there with the fathers and mothers, and with the children who had been her pupils now mildly quarrelling for the privilege of sitting next to their dear teacher. She abandoned herself without reserve to the spirit of the day, looked wherever little fingers pointed at squirrels or butterflies or meadow-larks, often twisting her neck nearly off to catch vanishing glimpses of what some pair of bright young eyes had discovered.

For some distance the road led through a level country with pleasant rural homes scattered along on either side; then the soft undulations of the foothills were reached and the road ascended with long curves and ever widening outlooks. The broad valley with its wheat fields, orchards, and vineyards lay shimmering

in the bright June sunshine, as beautiful as Arcadia, while the range of distant hills on the far horizon had the soft smoke-like blue color which rims almost every California landscape. A hush of delight settled over the merry party, broken only by exclamations from the irrepressible, or by petitions to the driver at each new point of observation to stop for a fresh feast to the eyes of his passengers. But at last the road entered the cañon and the great cliffs shut out the rest of the world. The air grew cooler. A greener hue came over the wayside grass and shrubs, and the rippling and gurgling of a little brook began to be heard, a sound most musical to the dwellers in the streamless California valleys. Beautiful wild flowers fringed the brookside or hung pendulous from the cliffs. The little wild linnets and canaries hospitably greeted the picnickers and every green leaf on the trees seemed to welcome them and to whisper, as they did to the dear poet Longfellow,

Come, be a child once more.

Our friends could hardly wait to reach the selected spot where a widening of the gorge

made room for a grove of oaks and madrones, and the moment the horses stopped, old and young made haste to alight. Mr. and Mrs. Fiske had arrived quite a little in advance of the others and very naturally took the rôle of host and hostess. Mrs. Fiske came forward with her hands too full of bluebells to allow of the usual hand-shaking, but she never seemed more cordial or at home than when she bade the ladies come right into her boudoir where every one could have an opportunity to at least lave her hands in the fountain of youth which she had just discovered.

“And every boy present may take off his shoes and stockings and have a good wade,” cried Mr. Leib, but every youngster had already rushed for the water with as unerring an instinct as if he were a turtle.

When Mr. Chapman arrived with his pair of boys it really seemed for a while, as there was no corral on the grounds, that he would have to tether them to prevent their amphibian tendencies. One of the young men had brought a long rope for a swing, and offered it to the anxious

father, but the little fellows soon learned that there were metes and bounds for boys as well as brooks, and the swing went up to the great satisfaction of the girls, who were soon emulating the birds in their breezy flight. Two or three family carry-alls, each with a fresh installment of Chautauquans, arrived in the course of an hour and completed the party. Horses were taken off and tied where they could browse about in deep content. Robes and cushions were spread on the grass and pleasant groups sat down on them in picturesque neighborliness.

Grandma Beckwith was led near Willie Kelllett's couch and seated on a camp chair which had been brought for her, and there she sat taking in all the sweet woodland odors and sounds, and enjoying to the full all the pleasant greetings and conversation which came to her, especially the long chat with Willie for whom she had a tender and growing affection. They both regretted that it was impossible for Miss Olmstead to be one of the party and planned to take her such a great basket of wild flowers and ferns as should make her prison walls a bower

of beauty, a plan they found easy to carry out as their friends were constantly bringing to them the choicest of their cullings.

Everywhere Miss Thurston was in great demand. The boys wanted her to come to the launching of a mimic fleet; the girls insisted she should try the swing, and each group that she approached made place for her with eager friendliness. She was about as happy as it is often given to mortals to be, what with her year's work satisfactorily done, and her well-earned vacation beginning in this charming way. She appreciated it all with fresh young enthusiasm and as she took long deep inspirations of the pure exhilarating odorous air she thanked God for the delight of being. She was an ardent tree lover and had not seen a great gnarled nature-planted tree in a whole year. How her eyes feasted now upon these forest monarchs! From her childhood she had been enraptured with running water, yet for years had not heard the music of a waterfall. How she drank in this liquid melody!

Of the same kind, if not degree, was Mrs.

Brooks' enjoyment of the scene. She sat down under a beautiful madrone tree, folded her hands in an idleness so unwonted that she could scarcely pacify her conscience, and lost herself in a reverie which brought back the far-off days of her childhood. The old Vermont home rose before her and she heard the tinkle of the little brook that ran by the old doorstone.

Christian Leib became the centre of an interested group to whom he described with great vividness and in very good English how the German peasant keeps his holidays. Mrs. Fiske drew him out with her bright questions and all were entertained with his account of the simple rural games, the athletic sports, and the good homely fare of "Vaterland." He spoke guardedly of the drinking customs, looking kindly at the listening boys: "Our brown bread is good; our cheese is good; bologna sausage is good—better, I think, than cake and pie, but the beer and wine is bad—all bad. It makes the men to act not like—Chautauquans," he added, after casting about for a noble representative class.

John Thompson swung the young ladies with such vigor and persistence that his collar became noticeably limp, but his zeal and his muscle never seemed to flag. He was very kind and attentive in other directions also, and, forgetting himself, really seemed intelligent and well bred. John was evidently growing toward his ideal.

Various parties wandered off down inviting little by-ways and came back with long streamers of fragrant yerba buena wound about their hats, and their hands overflowing with wild flowers—lupines, painted cups, airy little “lanterns of the fairies,” roses and the gorgeous eschscholtzias which flame on every California hillside in the spring and linger in moist places even till autumn.

Every one took his or her pleasure according to the desire of their hearts. But something seemed to call them all in about half past eleven. There was a prevailing impression that it was fully noon, which found voice through sundry small boys who boldly asserted that it was dinner time. A vote was taken which resulted

in the triumph of appetites over watches. One of the party who was an old miner, had already made an excellent fire and set a huge tea kettle over the glowing coals and now the housewives had only to bring their coffee and teapots to this improvised range for the final preparation.

Red table cloths were spread on the grass and heaped with tempting viands, while the children looked on with undisguised interest. Everybody contributed to the feast. Mr. Fowler did valiant service with a lemon squeezer, and under one of the young ladies' direction produced a pailful of delicious lemonade. One would have said as old Chaucer did of his Franklin's larder, that

It snowed there of mete and drinke.

At last everything was ready. Mrs. Fiske had even set her glasses of amber and ruby-hued jelly where the sun brought out their contrasted beauty; had put the bottle of olives near the seat she had planned for Dr. Hall who liked them as if he were a Greek; had arranged an ingenious system of flower tokens by which

each person's place was designated, and astonished them all with her pretty devices. Then Mr. Chapman thanked the Heavenly Father for all His good gifts and asked in true Chautauqua phrase that they might ever "keep Him in the midst." And the gay little feast began in that great dining hall whose walls were older than history and whose ceiling was the infinite dome of the sky.

In process of time it came to an end, and Kate had to acknowledge that Mrs. Brooks' judgment in regard to provisions had been better than her own. It was quite an easy matter to gather up the fragments.

Then the Circle widened out a little, though all kept their relative places, and the Secretary whisked out her little record book and proceeded to call the roll. No less than thirty of the forty members were present and responded with a quotation fitted to the occasion.

"The groves were God's first temples," said Mr. Chapman.

"Oh gift of God, Oh perfect day!" said Mrs. Chapman.

"The smell of the flowering grasses is sweeter than any rose," said Jennie Brooks.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," said her mother.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters," said Mrs. Beckwith.

"A noise like that of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune,"

was Mr. Fiske's quotation.

"The infinite bliss of nature
I feel in every vein,
The light and the life of summer
Blossom in heart and brain,"

said Mrs. Fiske when her turn came.

"Spake full well in language quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmanent do shine,"

answered Christian Leib.

Willie Kellett's response was from Chaucer :

"The birdes song was more pleasant to me
Than mete or drinke or any other thyng."

It was reserved for the gentle schoolmistress herself to recite Lowell's "June Day," which she did with a simplicity and naturalness

quite different from the ordinary elocutionist.

“To me the smallest flower that blows can bring
Thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears,”

quoted one.

Another had a verse from Shelley’s “Sky-lark.” Another a verse from Tennyson’s “Talking Oak.” Another, Browning’s “Oh to be in England”; while lines from Byron and Burns and our own nature-loving poets, followed in rapid succession,—a rosary of thought-pearls whose careful choosing and assigning betrayed the same deft hand that had made even the details of the lunch table graceful and harmonious.

When Dr. Hall’s turn came he said :

“None looked upon her but he straightway thought
Of all the greenest depths of country cheer,
And into each one’s mind was freely brought
What was to him the sweetest time of year.”

But he looked steadfastly into a tree-top as he repeated it as if there were no allusions to any lower object.

When the roll call came to an end Mr. Chapman was suddenly discovered to have a program, on which next in order came “Toasts.” These were in Mr. Fiske’s hands and were

formally announced and drank in Mr. Fowler's excellent lemonade.

First: "The C. L. S. C." responded to by Mr. Chapman in terms of glowing appreciation.

Second: "The San Benito Circle," responded to by John Thompson, who said that there might perhaps be *smarter* Circles in the United States, but they were yet to be heard from. (Laughter and prolonged applause.) John took courage and went on to modify his remark: "There may be just as smart people in some other town but the great thing is to get them together and start them. There's lots of gold in these California hills, but the smart thing is to find it; we all know," he concluded, "who struck this lead," and he sat down in a perfect salvo of applause.

Third: "Our President," read Mr. Fiske. Poor Kate threw up her hands in supplication, but Mrs. Chapman was on her feet and not to be stopped: "We will be sparing of our praises however richly deserved," she said, "but if he is held in honor who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, what shall be said

of her who has sown the seed for such a golden harvest as this? Let us give her our fervent benediction! (A tremendous flutter of handkerchiefs arose here, as if a flock of white doves had swept down upon the scene.) If we lay another little tribute at her feet it is only a token of our love and gratitude." And here Mr. Leib produced from its hiding place a box containing a complete set of Scott's novels in a choice edition, and set them down before the young President, whose words failed her but whose looks were eloquent with surprise and pleasure.

There might have been an embarrassing pause here but for another Chautauqua salute, and then Mr. Fiske hurried on to the last toast:

"The Notable Housewives who have Spread our Feast," which called out Dr. Hall in a complimentary speech about Chautauqua women as mistresses of more arts than are mentioned on diplomas. He said some excellent things about culture of the intellect giving added power in every direction, and made a pleasant ripple of laughter at the close of his remarks by saying that "it was a little trying to him to be called

upon to speak in favor of good cookery when it was a well known fact that his profession was deeply indebted to the other kind."

"Riddles and conundrums, strictly original," read Mr. Chapman from his program.

"I am the most famous of Chautauquans," said Mrs. Fiske, "and am composed of two syllables. My first is the French name for wine; my second is a coin ignored in California; my whole we delight to honor."

"Vincent!" cried half a dozen voices.

"I also am composed of two syllables," said Mr. Chapman. "My first is frequently found beside rivers; my second is said by a famous poet to be human; my whole is another famous Chautauquan as well as a proverbially dusty individual."

"As dusty as a—Miller," suggested Kate, who had recovered her voice.

"I'm another famous Chautauqua counselor," said Lizzie Towner, "and my name once meant a priest at the head of a monastery."

"Abbott," guessed somebody.

"I belong to the same 'goodlie companie,'"

said Kate, "and am as vigorous and wholesome as my name."

"Hale!" went up from ever so many voices.

"This is severe on the magi," said Dr. Hall, "but I can't help giving one more. My first is only right as a last resort; my second is a familiar bird; my whole is an abode for a domesticated animal, and also the name of a counselor, whose pardon I ask."

"Warren!" cried at least a dozen.

"Let the counselors have a rest now," said Mrs. Fiske, laughing, "but who of our number is very suitably domiciled if her name indicates her destiny?"

There was silence for moment and then a gleam came into Dr. Hall's eyes:

"If Miss Kate is doomed to *thirst on*, where should she live but with the *Brooks?*" he inquired.

"This is getting dangerously personal," said Mr. Chapman. "I feel sure I shall be the next victim, so I'll hurry on with my program."

"A Sermon from a Stone," by Robert Dean.

Then up rose the young suburban school-

teacher and picking up a pebble from the brook, he told in a clear interesting way the geologic story of the stone. It occupied less than ten minutes but it was a capital object lesson and set the boys thinking.

"Recitation by Flora Towner," and that charming young lady recited with wonderful effect, partly no doubt due to the environment, Lowell's "A Beggar Through the Wood am I." At the appeal to the oak she had but to stretch out her hands to the great tree which sheltered her:

"A little of thy steadfastness
Rounded with leafy gracefulness,
Old oak give me,
That the world's blasts may round me blow
And I yield gently to and fro,
While my stout hearted trunk below,
And firm set roots, unshaken be."

Then too, right across the brook was the rock for her to appeal to when she begged for some "stern, unyielding might" of the "old granite gray."

There was the "cheerful brook" with its "sparkling light content"; there was the pine with its "never dying green," and lastly the "sweet violet" right at her feet,—and as she

begged for their lovely gifts she seemed the prettiest and most winsome beggar that ever went through the wood.

“Tongues in Trees,” called up a young lady very much interested in botany, who read a five-minute essay naming all the trees in the Cañon and giving a few of their characteristics.

“Recitation” again, and this time Christian Leib read capitally this translation from his own Ditmarsh poet, Klaus Groth :

“ There dwelt a man in meadows green
Who hadn’t a cup or platter e’en;
To passing brook for drink he stooped,
And cherries plucked that o’er him drooped.

“ A jolly man ! A jolly man !
He’d never a pot; he’d never a pan;
He ate the apples off the tree,
And slept in clover cosily.

“ The sun for him was timepiece good :
His bird-cage was the shady wood,
They sang to him nights above his head
And waked him with the dawning red.

“ This man (Oh, what a silly man !)
To be o’er nice at last began,
To be o’er fussy he began,—
We’ve lived in houses e’er since then.—
Come ! Let’s off to the woods again !”

“ Music, by the Chautauqua Quartet,” read the minister, and four harmonious voices sang, “We gather the fragments, Lord.”

The end of the program was reached. A whole hour had slipped away delightfully. Only the children had strayed away—what “program” could ever hold a child of thoroughly natural tastes?

The mothers were growing a little anxious minded, but Miss Thurston detained them a moment. “Dear friends,” she said, “this Chautauqua Circle has been far more to me than I have to the Circle, and I want to thank you over and over for all your kindness. I can never forget any of you—nor this perfect day. I wish it were possible that we all might meet at Monterey. Do try to plan for it. Monterey is so near I am sure you can many of you go even if your stay has to be short at the Assembly. This is my graduating year. How I would love to have *my* Chautauquans around me! You all have the Assembly circulars and know how much has been planned for us. I do not mean to say good-by to you, but just *au revoir*, or, as Mr. Leib would say, *auf wiedersehen*.”

And so the Round Table adjourned not exactly *sine die*.

An hour or so more of strolling and chatting on the part of the older people, of cliff-climbing by the adventurous boys, of fern-hunting by the girls, of little romantic saunterings off down sylvan paths by young people to whom a third party was one too many, and it was discovered that the sun was dropping down the west with that fatal celerity which is especially noticeable on red-letter days. The young people came back from their walks, gentlemen began to look at their watches, and the boys were poking into their mothers' lunch baskets to see what was left. It was time to go home.

"Let us have one more song from our quartet," pleaded Mrs. Fiske, and so the young singers stood up in the flickering shade and sang the grandest of Chautauqua songs :

"Sing paeans over the past,
We bury the dead years tenderly
To find them again in eternity,
Sing paeans over the past.

"But hail—all hail to the new!
The future lies like a world new-born
All steeped in sunshine and mists of morn,
And arched with a cloudless blue.
All hail! All hail to the new!"

As the sweet voices rose and fell in the

cadences of the first verse an irresistible "teariness" fell upon the gentler sex, but most of them brightened up over the joyous final outburst.

The next morning Kate ran over to Mrs. Fiske for a parting word, and as she held her friend's hand long and closely, she said: "How much I owe you, and what an enchantress' wand you held yesterday!"

"Oh, no! no!" protested Mrs. Fiske. "It is I who am your hopeless debtor. It is you who always have a heart at leisure from itself. But as to our pleasant yesterday, of course I did put some thought into it. Why shouldn't I when I love you so, Katie?"

CHAPTER VIII.

BY MONTEREY BAY.

CHAUTAUQUA LAKE with its Parthenon-like Hall in the Grove, its Colosseum-like Amphitheater, and its cultured associations, can well begin to wear classic airs. But the Occidental Chautauquans have no less beautiful a home for their Assembly. Man has done less; but the matchless bay, the limitless forest, the majestic mountains, make up an environment before which all human architecture must fade away. All these combine to make Monterey incomparably charming. It is rich also in historical associations. Here a hundred years ago the Franciscan friars came with as lofty a courage and as sublime a devotion as brought the Pilgrims to the New England coast. It was even a more purely Christian enterprise than that of the *Mayflower*; and the cross these black-robed

men planted as soon as they set foot upon the wave-washed beach was the symbol of a faith unwavering as the rock beneath it, and the pledge of a devotion which might easily end in martyrdom.

To Kate Thurston this favorite camp ground was a familiar spot. For two years she had spent a fortnight of her vacation here and her love for the place was constantly deepening. She had seen the beautiful cottages spring up like enchantment on every hand, and realized that a little city of summer homes would soon take the place of the old clusters of tents; she welcomed, with a shade of reservation, all the improvements in the line of artistic adornment and modern convenience. Her only fear was that that wonderful pine forest would too soon lose its flavor of the wilderness, and that its sylvan paths, which the shy woodland creatures now haunted with such freedom, might have to give way to carefully graded streets and broad avenues. But the Chautauqua Assembly was a modern improvement which Kate welcomed without reserve. Indeed it was that which first

drew her to Monterey. For two summers she had studied the flora of the sea with that encyclopedia of marine lore, Dr. C. L. Anderson, to whom the sea is what the forest was to his friend, Henry D. Thoreau.

She had gathered shells with that other indefatigable genius of the Monterey Assembly, Professor Josiah Keep, and had peered with him into the beauty and the mystery of these lowly forms of animal life.

She had looked with reverent awe through Dr. Wythe's great microscope, had listened to his eloquent and learned talks upon the science of life, and had thrilled responsive to his clear demonstration that SOUL still eludes the finest analysis of the biologist.

She had listened to and enjoyed all the brilliant lecturers and essayists of the Assemblies of '82 and '83, and greatly prized the little acquaintance she had with all the officers and teachers of the Pacific Coast Branch of the C. L. S. C. But to her the attractions of the Assembly centered in her beloved teacher-friend, Prof. Norton. It was his tall peculiar figure

which her eye singled out in any crowd. It was his kind, fatherly : " Why, how do you do, my child ? " with the brightening of the fine dark eyes, the softening of the lines in the serious, thoughtful face, and the cordial grasp of the strong but gentle hand, that made the one welcome which to her was worth coming two hundred miles to receive.

The summer Assembly of 1884 was not to be illuminated by Prof. Norton's presence ; Kate knew that he had gone East, but it was her graduating time and she felt a great desire to celebrate the occasion. Her diploma would have greatly added value if it came from Dr. Stratton's hand, and her loyal heart answered to all the social elements in the Chautauqua plan. Her young spirit was easily stirred by ceremonial and she often declared that she was a regular Fourth of July girl as her birthday chanced to dictate. She frankly owned that she doted on music and banners.

So when she reached her home in Sacramento, and had settled down to practical life after the first day or two of joyous overflow, she began to

unfold a scheme which was to include the whole household and make a grand holiday.

The family was made up of a father who had been a Congregational minister of not a little local fame in far-off New England, but whom an accident, followed by a long semi-invalidism, had left poor in purse yet rich in the graces which suffering brings and in the loving devotion of his wife and children ; a mother whose natural gentleness and unselfishness had been deepened by care and sorrow ; an older sister who was a popular teacher in one of the Sacramento schools ; and a young brother who was hilarious to the full extent of his boy allowance.

It was from her father largely that Kate inherited her fine brave spirited nature, and they were friends and allies to a delightful degree. So she took her low ottoman beside her father's chair in the twilight of a sultry June day, and thus as it were intrenched in her fortifications, boldly challenged the rest of the family with : "Papa and I think we can all go to Monterey for the month of July !".

"Dear me, what a project!" said the mother almost with a gasp.

"That sounds like Katie," said Mary, which meant that it might possibly be a little visionary.

"Hooray!" cried Fred.

"Yes," went on Kate, quite regardless of interruptions, "it is like this. There are the Nelsons over at the hotel who'll just like to come into our shady little house and take care of things. They'll pay something for rent, too; and here are Mary and I getting positively affluent, and though Mary can't go with us she can come the very day her school closes, while Fred can lose a few days of school without harm. Of course he'll be heartbroken about it (here Fred whipped out a handkerchief and fell to sopping up imaginary tears), yet I can teach him several things at Monterey (at this he brightened up a little) and we can take a tent and live ever so cheaply, and I'll pay the bills and be only too happy! Now somebody else may speak briefly and to the point, provided they don't go to objecting."

"I may as well confess," said her father, "that I've a big retaining fee and can only in honor speak on the affirmative side. The ocean does look very tempting to a man who grew up beside it and now has not seen it for fifteen years. The type-writer which my good girls gave me last Christmas has made my work doubly profitable this year, so I feel quite independent and rich as well as these purse-proud young women," and he looked fondly at his daughters.

"It really does seem providential that our boarders have gone East this summer," said the mother, as if thinking aloud. Then she added apologetically: "It seems a shame to speak of them as boarders,—our dear old friends who have made their home with us so long. Nobody will be gladder to see them safely back than I. What a blessing the good old pair have been to us all these years!"

"Well, it's settled, isn't it?" cried Fred, hardly waiting for his mother to finish her reflections.

Kate nodded, and Fred's hat went up in the

air while he made a lunge at his pet sister, whom he always regarded as the lawful object for his somewhat violent caresses.

"Yes, it is settled," said Mary, always practical and serious; "now, who has to have anything new?"

"New!" cried Kate; "now that shows how little you know about Pacific Grove and Monterey! Why it's the place of all the world to wear out your old clothes. It's simply idyllic. We all get to looking like Quakers, so calm and peaceful,—free from the racking care of finery. Mother's immortal gray camel's hair is just the thing, and my brown serge that I've worn all winter in school is almost too good! Positively, Mary, I'm afraid you haven't anything quite old enough to be up to the grove standards, and you're too tall for my ancient garments. Perhaps, though, one well-dressed individual may give the family a certain tone. Yes, Mary, on the whole you needn't stay at home on this account."

She stood up and ran her fingers through her father's gray hair with: "We've gained our

point, haven't we, papa? And two weeks from to-day, dear papa, we'll be in Pacific Grove watching old ocean."

"You mean you've gained your point, Katie," answered her father, drawing her face down for half a dozen kisses.

Two weeks of busy preparation followed, and then it came to pass that on the evening of June 25th the Thurstons were all deposited before one of the little tent cottages of Pacific Grove. Kate, who had naturally taken the helm in the planning and management of the enterprise, and whose familiarity with the Grove gave her still greater prerogatives, unlocked the tent door and ushered in the family with great airs of proprietorship. The room was about fourteen by sixteen feet and contained two double beds and a cot, a little stove, a stand, and three chairs. At the rear was a canvas-covered kitchen with cooking stove, pine table, and a cupboard scantily supplied with dishes and cooking utensils. The beds looked neat and proved most comfortable, while bright colored chintz curtains surrounding each gave them, as

Kate said, "a certain degree of seclusion." The whole arrangement would have been poverty-stricken enough anywhere else, but here it was ample for their needs, and the dusty travelers proceeded to unpack and arrange their limited personal effects, while Kate, capturing Fred for an escort, ran out, as she said, "to set the tide towards them"—the tide of needful supplies—milkman, baker, butcher, fish vender, and last but not least, the delicious cool soft water from Carmel River had to be turned on so as to reach their special pipe and faucet.

"We are just to sleep and eat here," ordained Mistress Kate, after they had enjoyed a refreshing cup of tea, with bread and butter fit for a king, and raspberries better than most kings can have for love or money. "The order is imperative that every possible moment is to be spent out of doors."

The voice of the sea was calling them even now, but Fred alone was fresh enough for a run along the shore that evening. Every one of them, however, felt the delightful invigorating influence of the air, and could hardly settle

down to eat or sleep. Indeed the roar of many waters kept them all awake except Fred. It was really pathetic to Kate to see how her father's blood was stirred. He had leaned from the car window as they approached Monterey to catch the first glimpse of the water, and with as keen delight as the old Greeks felt on their return from their long inland march, he kept exclaiming, "The sea! the sea!" as they drove over from Monterey Station to the Grove around the beautiful curve of Monterey Bay. Nor could he help listening all night long to the clamorous waves. He could scarcely wait for daylight before answering their call. Toward morning he half slept and dreamed he was a boy again by old Penobscot Bay. He heard the long ago voices of father and mother, brothers and sisters. Then he was out on the water and could feel the billows rocking under his little boat. He woke thinking he was running up the hill after his fishing-tackle while his brothers were baling the water out of the somewhat leaky little craft.

Mrs. Thurston also lay awake and could

scarcely divest herself of the thought that she too was in the home of her youth and that a wild Maine northeaster was blowing in great wintry gusts against the house.

Early in the morning Mr. Thurston set forth before any one else was stirring, and when he came back at breakfast with a bright color in his face and his hands full of shells, he was met with a chorus of accusation : " You forgot your cane ! You forgot your cane !" And sure enough there stood his "main-stay and dependence" in its place behind the door, and he had never missed it !

" Mind-cure !" shouted Fred.

" Sea-cure !" said Kate, drawing her father into the kitchen and seating him at the table while she proceeded to sit on an inverted box beside him and help him to mush in a cracked saucer, and to coffee in a cup minus the usual foundation of a saucer.

" Nobody can have two saucers at once," she said ; " we'll soon find out in what prodigal luxury we live at home." Then, as Mr. Thurston produced from his pockets a dozen beautiful

limpet shells clean and shining: "Butter dishes. Individual butter dishes!" she exclaimed, running to give them a final rinse. "'Sweet are the uses of adversity'; we shall all become inventive geniuses. Look at the sumptuous divan your old trunk makes! Behold that old barrel which some past tenant left—after breakfast I shall wave my wand over it and it will become an elegant toilet table! When the genius of the place seizes you, papa, we shall fairly bristle with inventions, and mamma will wonder why you have never been heard of in the patent office at Washington."

As soon as the breakfast was over, Fred took hold of the dish-washing with unwonted alacrity while his sister hurried around to help their mother with regulating the tent, and then, having succeeded in tying a shade hat on the head of that somewhat reluctant woman, and hanging a blanket shawl over her arm in case the breeze should prove too cool, Kate fairly drove her mother off for a stroll on the beach with her father. Fred followed in exuberant happiness, while Kate put on her hat and went up to

the office to register the Thurston family and to look for familiar names. At almost every turn she met some one whom she had known more or less in the summers gone by, and stopped for pleasant words of greeting. At the office she ran down the pages of arrivals and found not a single San Benito name. It was hardly time for them yet, she thought, yet she hoped to find one or two. She wrote her own list of names with their tent number, and then strolled toward the beach. The day was clear and warm. The pines cast cool, deep shadows across her path and ever before her shone the blue waters of the bay. It seemed to her nothing in the world could be more beautiful than these tree-crowned cliffs, this lovely expanse of softly heaving water, with little sail boats dotting it here and there, and far off the misty blue ranges of the Coast Mountains. She thought of the delight and refreshment these scenes were giving her father and mother and young brother, and how, when her dear Mary came there would be nothing more to desire—her happiness would be complete. Then a quick little blush ran over

her face as if she were conscious of another wish which as yet she had scarcely breathed to herself.

Suddenly a joyous cry of "Miss Kate! Miss Kate!" startled her, and she saw the sturdy figure of little John Leib on a side street, but instead of running toward her he wheeled and ran the other way, evidently scampering off to convey the glad news of her discovery. He ran toward a cluster of tents on that part of the grounds set aside for campers, and "Miss Kate" followed him with all haste. In a moment more she was surrounded by a bevy of her Chautauquans who fairly overwhelmed her with their welcomings. She was plied with questions and drawn hither and thither to look at the new edition of *San Benito*. It seemed they had all come over two days before, some by the train and others with their own conveyances, but in the hurry of putting up tents and getting settled had neglected to register. "Besides," said John Thompson, "we're going to proclaim to the world that we're the *San Benito C. L. S. C.*, and we want our President to head the list."

"Indeed, I'll be only too proud to write my name there. I'll get them to let me cross it out from its present humble place as a member of a private family," laughed Kate, "and I'll come out at the top of your names with all my titles in big letters."

It was a gay little encampment into which she was now ushered. In one tent the Leib family was nicely domiciled with matting on the ground, straw beds neatly made up on the matting, and a little room left to circulate around in. The Brooks family had a similar arrangement; another family had a finer outfit in the way of canvas floor, camp beds, chairs and tables, with quite an array of curtains and home-like conveniences. Two large tents completed the settlement; in one of which half a dozen young ladies made a merry community, the other contained a long table and was the common dining-hall of the encampment. A little distance off was a small inclosure with canvas sides but open to the sky overhead, and here was a large cooking stove presided over by a white aproned Chinaman, who cooked for the

whole community, and who seemed as much in his element as any of the party. Bread, pies, and cakes were bought at the restaurant or of venders, but all else was concocted by "John" and served up in fine style and large quantities three times a day. When John rang his bell every body took his or her camp stool or box and proceeded to be seated in orderly fashion in the dining tent.

Several young men had come with the party and had found furnished rooms near by.

"Altogether we count up twenty-five, and we are very fine feeling peoples whether we are fine looking or not," said Mr. Leib.

"Ah, you are fishing for a compliment about your good looks," said Kate. "I shall not tell you all I think about that, but I shall be proud to head the procession up to the office."

And so they set forth, Kate walking ahead with Mrs. Brooks, and all the rest following in long array, the young men and maidens bringing up the rear. Amid much pleasant jesting and laughter they registered first at the general office and then at the Chautauqua headquarters,

where they were duly introduced to the Secretary and Treasurer and made cordially welcome to all Chautauqua honors and privileges. They were instructed to wear a live-oak spray as a badge of their C. L. S. C. membership, and to be sociable with all Chautauquans, which they fully resolved to do.

On their way to the office Mrs. Brooks had given her escort several pieces of information in regard to her San Benito friends about whom she had made eager inquiries. Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were not coming as their little people were not quite old enough to be taken care of comfortably away from home. Mr. and Mrs. Fiske might possibly appear for the last day or two, but were going with San Francisco friends to Lake Tahoe about this time.

"And Dr. Hall—you haven't asked about him," said Mrs. Brooks, "and maybe you know that his mother is coming from Boston to see him, and last week he went up to San Francisco to meet her. I met him on the street the day before he went, and asked him if he was coming to Monterey, and he said everything depended on his

mother ; maybe she'd like to stay a few days at Del Monte. There was going to be quite a party of tourists and of course they would go to Del Monte. He would be with his mother as much as possible, and if they were at Del Monte at the right time he would come over to the Assembly as much as he could."

"How are the Kellets?" asked Kate.

"All the same as usual," answered Mrs. Brooks, "except Willie ; he's sort of white and drooping this warm weather."

"I wish he could be set down here by the sea," said Kate fervently, and the first little shadow fell across her morning sunshine.

A young live-oak tree was making a struggle for existence between two of the cottages near the large entrance gate, and hither Miss Thurston led her friends to obtain the required badges. A general search for pins ensued, followed by a leafing out of the whole party. There were the usual remarks about the verdant badge being appropriate and becoming, and as they were generally in a hilarious mood everybody laughed at these original witticisms longer and louder than usual.

The group were at their noisiest, John Thompson having suggested that he should have a dozen leaves put on just between his shoulders in the form of a horseshoe to advertise his profession as well as his Chautauqua membership, to say nothing of the aesthetic character of the ornamentation ; when suddenly there rolled in at the gate an elegant Del Monte carriage full of ladies and gentlemen who were evidently going to "do" the Grove. The Chautauquans were too conspicuous to escape attention and upon them was turned what John afterward described as "the Del Monte glare."

On the back seat of the barouche was a fine looking elderly lady in widow's dress, and beside her sat a slender aristocratic young lady who put up an eye-glass with a beautifully gloved hand. One of the gentlemen sitting opposite with his back to the San Benito group turned to look when he saw that eye-glass going into place, and gave a little start, colored perceptibly, and then raised his hat with a quick acknowledgment of acquaintance, while just the faintest tinge of surprise or embarrassment

held in check any overflow of cordial greeting.

Meanwhile Kate, who was pinning on Mrs. Brooks' badge, and who had taken off her gloves and was looking very rustic in her morning attire, glanced up to see what spell had fallen upon her friends, and flushed crimson. She did not even return the gentleman's bow, as nearly as she could afterward remember, but dropped her eyes before that critical Boston eye-glass and jabbed the pin into Mrs. Brooks with such energy as to wring from even that patient soul a cry of distress.

"Oh, I beg a thousand pardons, dear Mrs. Brooks!" she cried penitently, while she was inwardly feeling she could cheerfully stick a thousand pins into herself as a punishment for that ridiculous blush.

She walked along with her friends as they turned back homeward, and made a desperate effort not to show a ruffled spirit as they discussed Dr. Hall and Del Monte people generally.

"I 'spose that's the style of people he's been used to," said Martha Brooks.



"Too high-toned for Chautauquans," said John Thompson.

"I'm sure he bowed to us friendly enough," said Christian Leib. "What would you haf, John? A man can ride in a fine carriage with fine peoples and not be foolish-proud, either. I do not like dis way of speaking," his tongue slipping into its old ways as it was inclined to do when he was excited.

Kate thanked him in her heart, but what she said was: "Now is the time to see the bathers. You must all go right down to the bathing beach, but I must hurry home to set our dinner going. I'll see you all again by and by."

She turned quickly off from the main street and almost ran toward her little tent home, in momentary fear lest she should again encounter that Del Monte carriage. Once safely within the door she sat down and scolded herself with an energy and fervor such as she had never bestowed upon her most refractory pupil. She did not hesitate to call herself a goose and an idiot! She accused herself of nonsensical ideas

of half a dozen different sorts and finally of base disloyalty to her own standards.

"I'd like to see you behave in that way again, Kate Thurston," she remarked, as she stood herself off like the culprit she was—"flaming up like a red hollyhock just because a gentleman bows to you, and hating yourself, and your old shabby clothes, and even your honest friends just because somebody else is—is different!"

She seemed to think after a little that she had thoroughly disciplined and subdued this offending young woman, and fell to preparing dinner with a zest which was most commendable, both as a quietus to her own disturbed spirit and as a source of gratification to a hungry family who appeared upon the scene promptly at twelve o'clock.

Yet the whole afternoon, and even far into the night, Kate's soul was disquieted within her, and she kept seeing a delicate fair young lady in a soft gray travelling dress, with hat and gloves exactly to match, and with a filmy blue veil holding down her blonde frizzes, gazing fixedly at her through a pair of gold-rimmed

eye-glasses. Sometimes, too, the vision had a tendency to grow double, and a young man with a grave and slightly perplexed face lifted his hat to her in polite recognition.

It was in vain that she took her father and mother to call on her Chautauquans, and enjoyed their evident mutual appreciation.

It was equally unavailing that she took several of her friends on a walk to the lighthouse and shared as far as possible their delight in the wild and rugged scenery of Point Pinos and the great billows of the ocean which break ceaselessly over that rocky promontory.

She was secretly haunted, and the spirits would not down at her bidding.

In the Del Monte carriage as it whirled along there was also some comment and subsequent disturbance.

“What extraordinary looking people!” said the young lady, dropping her eye-glasses with slow grace, and elevating her eyebrows.

“Why, my dear, Philip bowed to them,” said the elder lady reprovingly yet mildly.

“They are acquaintances of mine from San

Benito," said Dr. Hall in explanation, giving his moustache a fierce pull afterward to punish himself for saying acquaintances instead of friends.

"Yes?" inquired the young lady. "A physician has to have patients from every class, I suppose, but it must be very tiresome"; and she let her languid eyes rest sympathizingly upon her cousin's face.

He made no reply, but the shade of annoyance deepened rather than disappeared, as the gentleman who shared the seat with him, remarked, "That was rather a nice looking girl in the brown dress—the one with the fine color, you know. I say, Hall, she wouldn't be a bad patient."

"They are my friends," said Dr. Hall, with almost savage emphasis.

The young lady's eyebrows went up again, while the discomfited young man gazed at the revolving wheels with an interest which amounted to a scientific investigation. The elder lady made a prompt diversion by asking her son the meaning of the arches under which

they drove, and he explained briefly the Chautauqua Society and its annual Assemblies.

"Ah, yes," she said, "I understand. Genevieve, it is like our Boston Society for the Promotion of Home Study."

But Genevieve was still musing upon her cousin's emphatic statement, and fell back upon her standing reply to all sorts of information, especially if she questioned the "good form" of the matter involved. "Yes?"

"I am a member of the Society and have found it pleasant and useful," said Dr. Hall, still addressing his mother. "I hope to come over here again while you are at Del Monte and shall be glad to have you attend some of the lectures with me. They will be well worth hearing if they're not in Tremont Temple. But I fear my little typhoid patient will keep me closely in San Benito next week. I must not even spend Sunday with you as I hoped to do. My letter to-day makes me feel that I must go back on the first train. We shall barely have time for a lunch before I must go."

Mrs. Hall looked at him with fond maternal

eyes: "I can hardly realize that my boy has grown into a man full of cares and responsibilities," she said, "but I suppose I ought to be very thankful for the days you have given me already. I cannot bear to lose sight of you so soon again. I would go back with you if I did not have to chaperone my young ladies. Pardon me, Genevieve, I did not mean to speak of you and your friends as burdensome," and she laid her hand gently on her niece's with a fine courtesy of look and tone which seemed to characterize all her words and movements, and which gave an added charm to her beautiful age.

They drove rapidly toward Del Monte, after a half hour in the pleasant avenues of the Grove, and an hour later Dr. Hall was on the railway train. He had a book which he tried to read. It was Ebers' "Homo Sum," and he had been greatly interested, but he found it impossible now to keep his place. He, too, was haunted by a vision, but his was a bright girlish face under a broad shade hat. Something suddenly deepens its tints to carmine and robs its owner of her

usual self-possession, but the face never looked lovelier to him. Then the kind, honest, friendly faces which were grouped around this central figure, floated before him. They had all grown familiar and pleasant to this fastidious young man, whom contact with the world had taught to estimate people far more justly than by his old standards. He felt warm and angry still with his classmate who had sat beside him on the morning drive and whom his cousin Genevieve considered a perfect gentleman: "The impertinent puppy," he thought. "Christian Leib would be too delicate and chivalrous to make such a remark about a young lady—so would John Thompson even. What did this caste business amount to anyway? "And yet—and yet he was not insensible to the charm of fine raiment, of slow, leisureful movements,—

The air of high repose,
Which marks the caste of Vere de Vere."

He reached the San Benito Station early in the afternoon and hurried to the bedside of the sick child whom he had left a few days before out of danger as he then hoped, but whom a

slight cold had sent back into fever and delirium. Until late in the night he forgot everything but the little sufferer, and devoted himself unremittingly to his relief. Then he threw himself on his bed exhausted in body and mind and tried to sleep. Lo, there was the girlish face again, startled, conscious, blushing, "growing and fading and growing." The morning was red in the East before he forgot himself and all the world.

Ten days elapsed before his patient was sufficiently convalescent for Dr. Hall to visit his mother. Meanwhile he had won for himself the boundless gratitude of one household and a reputation for fidelity and skill which spread far and wide through the whole community.

Another patient that same week had claimed a large place in the young physician's time and sympathy. Willie Kellett had a serious hemorrhage from the lungs, and lay weak and pallid on his narrow bed. His eyes looked larger and brighter than ever and he was very patient—even cheerful. The Doctor came every day once and sometimes twice, always bringing

some delicate fruit or beautiful flower, and in every way showing that he came as a friend as well as a physician. The boy had been interesting to him always, now he took hold of his heart; but he could not hide from himself that the little taper of Willie's life was flickering ominously and that some day ere long a breath might end it. The boy's keen eyes read it all in his friend's face and yet he smiled up at him with his old-time confidence.

When the Doctor came to say good-by to Willie for a few days, as he was going to Monterey, they had quite a little talk in the twilight all by themselves. The Doctor spoke in his usual cheerful way: "Now, Willie, keep up your courage—though you're such a plucky fellow I hardly need to say that. Take your tonic regularly and we'll have you up in your chair again pretty soon, I hope."

But Willie laid his thin hand in the Doctor's and said, "You believe in God and in Heaven, don't you, Doctor?"

"Yes, Willie, I do; thank God, I do," he said fervently.

Then Willie was still for a little while. "Will you see Miss Kate down at Monterey?" he asked at length.

"Yes, my boy, I hope so."

"Will you tell her," he said slowly, "that nobody has ever helped me as she has, but I would rather go to heaven than to graduate in Chautauqua or to be a famous wood-carver,—and give her my dear love."

Another pause and then, "I used to be very impatient and sometimes very wretched, Doctor, before I knew Miss Kate, but somehow everything has seemed different to me since, especially God, and our lives here, and Heaven."

"It is just the same with me," said Dr. Hall, and his voice had a wonderful earnestness, "God bless her."

"Yes," responded Willie, "God bless her!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FRIENDS' MEETING.

SUNDAY is a most restful day at Pacific Grove and the Thurstons, after all the fatigue of Saturday's excitements and excursions, literally bathed in its loveliness. Not a sound broke the stillness of early morning save the voices of nature. Linnets and canaries sang in the pine boughs over the tent, now and then changing their perch for the tent itself where their pretty shadows flickered to and fro and their little feet pattered about keeping time to their music. The morning breeze went whispering through the pines, and the ocean kept up its majestic bass solo. It seemed a typical Sabbath day.

The Thurstons ate their breakfast with doors and windows open. There was not a passer-by to glance in, and, as the nearest tent was ten or fifteen rods away, they were spared the annoy-

ance of hearing their neighbors' domestic consultations, and also the restriction which would follow to themselves from knowing that what they whispered in the ear would be proclaimed through their own thin walls.

After breakfast at prayers Mr. Thurston read that grand sea poem, the 104th Psalm, and all saw and felt the "glory of the Lord," like an almost visible Shekinah, resting upon "the great and wide sea."

At Monterey the year before Kate had met some delightful people who were members of the Society of Friends, and had learned that they were in the habit, when in the Grove, of holding a Friends' meeting every "First Day," in a quiet little cove at the east end of the grounds. Knowing that the spirit of this simple service would harmonize with her father's habits of thought, she suggested that this morning they should worship with these dear Friends, of whom she had caught a passing glimpse the day before. Mr. Thurston cheerfully acceded to the plan, and Mrs. Thurston never needed any urging to go where her good husband

and daughter led the way, while Fred's vote was always in favor of a novelty.

In good season they all went. They found already a few of the gentle followers of George Fox sitting on the clear white sand with faces expressive of meditative calm, but these proved only the nucleus of the meeting, for, dropping down the steep rocky pathways, came singly or in little parties fresh accessions to the gathering until perhaps fifty people—men and women and little children—were grouped about the Friends. Many sects were represented there and widely varying conditions of life. The Episcopalian sat beside the Methodist; the wife of the millionaire shared her rug with the sewing girl, and all looked alike serious and reverent. The little children caught the spirit and sat with clasped hands looking down at the sparkling sand or off at the softly heaving sea. The silence was more impressive than any opening anthem. For ten minutes there was no spoken word. Each heart communed with itself and was still. Then the low voice of a woman broke the silence with earnest words of

prayer,—a prayer which even the youngest present could follow in its devout expressions of gratitude, its glad tribute of praise and adoration, its earnest plea for forgiveness, and its entreaty for spiritual blessing on the little company gathered there, and on the whole world. The Kingdom of Heaven seemed very near, and the Unseen and Eternal as real as the morning sunshine. After a little silence the same voice went on speaking of thoughts which had been suggested by the reading of the Word in a still hour of the early morning. The Scripture referred to was :

“If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.”

With the same simplicity and beauty of diction which marked the prayer, and with a scarcely perceptible chanting tone, the Friend spoke of the blessings which come to the receptive heart. She described in winning terms the lowly attitude of the Heavenly Visitor and how the spirit may know its Divine Guest. “Just as the listening ear hears the sweet

sounds of this June morning," she said, "while to the dull or inattentive ear all this delight is lost, so to the quiet, thoughtful, listening soul comes the voice of the Spirit. A gracious hospitality flings wide the door and all Heaven enters in."

The little sermon with its familiar illustrations sank deeply into every heart. Another brief silence followed in which it seemed as if at many a hidden door that quiet petition for admittance must have been heard and answered. Then a gray-haired man spoke of the good providence of God to which every one present could bear witness. He reminded all of the widely separated homes wherein they had begun the journey of life. Thousands of miles and even the broad ocean, had divided these starting places. Perils by land and by sea had beset their pathways. Temporal and spiritual dangers had encompassed each, yet here were all the paths converged. Here in peace and safety were all the pilgrims gathered. His voice hesitated, a little flush ran over his fine delicate face, and then he recited some verses,

which, when Mr. Thurston at the close of the meeting inquired about, he found were original with this Friend. The poem was:

A PRAYER.

God of our lives, past and to be,
God of the earth, the land, the sea,
With all Thy works we worship Thee.

In humble faith our souls would bear,
To Thee our every weight of care,
And all the burden of our prayer.

But with what language can we raise
A fitting tribute to Thy praise,
And celebrate Thy works and ways?

Fresh blessings, countless as the sand,
Flow as perpetual from Thy hand
As do the waves upon the strand.

More deep and boundless than the sea,
Thy love from all eternity
Tides every inlet full and free.

On this Pacific shore we meet,
This temple-grove our pilgrim feet
Draws to its sacred calm retreat.

Make us to feel Thy presence near,
And with Thy goodness crown Thy year
Whose harvest fruits are offered here.

Our Feast of Tabernacles bless;
Hallow these tents and cottages
With Peace, and Joy, and Righteousness.

A host from many a church and land,
We would with loyal heart and hand
For Christ our King united stand.

Thou who hast led us all our days
O'er fertile plains and desert ways,
Be here an altar to Thy praise!

"Has no one else a message or word of testimony?" asked the leader of the meeting.

In response one after another recited a hymn or a text of Scripture or bit of religious verse, even the children sharing in this part of the service. Mr. Thurston recited the beautiful description of a storm at sea, of its control by the Lord of the tempest, and the bringing of the sailor "to the desired haven," from the 107th Psalm. His daughter repeated Miss Warner's hymn :

"Father I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that must surely come
I do not fear to see,
But I ask Thee for a present mind
Intent on pleasing Thee."

Every heart present followed her as if in prayer, and when the sweet voice reached the closing stanza :

"In the service which Thy love appoints
There are no bounds for me,
For my secret soul is taught the truth
Which makes Thy children free,
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty,"

there were tears in more eyes than Miss Thurston's.

A mother leaned over and whispered to a dear little girl who put her hand into the maternal keeping to gain confidence, and then recited in clear child-like accents :

“Oh what can little hands do
To serve the King of Heaven ?”

As she finished the exquisite verses the leader of the meeting said earnestly :

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him and when He had placed him in their midst He said, except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The silence fell again. Through it there came the soft tones of the chapel bell ringing for the Sunday-school, and after a moment the leader shook hands with a Friend seated near her and the familiar greeting was passed on and around in quiet cordiality.

The First Day meeting was ended. There was a general rising and dispersion soon after, but not until Kate had introduced her father and mother to these Friends with whom a new but most hearty and appreciative friendship was then and there inaugurated.

The Sunday-school filled another hour pleasantly, a few hours of restful home life followed, and then an evening service in the chapel with admirable preaching closed the Sabbath Day journey toward the Heavenly Country.

"Thank God for this Feast of Tabernacles," said Mr. Thurston fervently, as he laid his head on his pillow.

"It helps one to understand the old Hebrew feasts," said his wife.

"Ye shall dwell in booths seven days," quoted Kate from behind her curtain.

"I like that kind of religion," asserted Fred drowsily.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHAUTAUQUA ASSEMBLY.

EARLY Monday morning Kate and her brother went up to the Chapel, which was "The Hall in the Grove" to the Monterey Bay Chautauquans, to lend a hand in the decorations. They found the energetic lady who had it in charge already on the spot, and soon by ones and twos the Chautauquans began to appear. Under their skillful hands, and with the help of a limitless supply of young pines and cypress boughs, the bare interior became a fragrant bower. The pines stood in the corners and by the upright beams like straight young grenadiers, while the cypress ran in long festoons around the walls, hung in wreaths about the lamp brackets, or twined around the slender supporting columns. The hall was really like a great barn with bare rafters and beams, but with the help of the

adornment it all seemed beautiful and suitable for the purpose of this midsummer encampment. Ferns and the delicate odorous vine known as "yerba buena," trimmed platform and desk, and exquisite bouquets of callas, fuchsias, marguerites, and pelargoniums, such as no other Assembly Hall in the world could possibly show, gave the crowning touch to the decorations.

Kate worked with diligence all day and ran home warm and weary at evening, but when she came back to the opening exercises of the evening and saw the whole effect when it was lighted by lamps whose brilliancy was softened by shades of tissue paper, green, yellow, and red, crimped and fringed by deft Chautauqua fingers, it seemed to her like fairyland. No Gothic cathedral or stately Grecian temple could have seemed to Kate Thurston so appropriate and charming as this rustic and unpretending place. And here day after day she came, morning, afternoon, and evening, always with fresh pleasure and satisfaction. There were plenty of people who surveyed the whole

thing with a sort of half-veiled contempt, and there were plenty of Chautauquans even who groaned over the uncushioned benches, with slatted backs which never seemed to hit the right point in the backs which leaned against them, but our heroine was not of these.

And the lectures and classes were to her eager young intellect, which had given and given from its stores all the year long with so little leisure or opportunity for receiving, like manna from heaven. From the opening lecture by Dr. Anderson, so beautiful and true in thought and feeling, to the last word said at the "mussel-bake" on the beach the last day of the Assembly, to Kate it was all good. Her note-book grew full of food for future thought and reference as she listened to Prof. Bernard Moses' fine scholarly lectures upon the Christian Reformation ; while even her rapid pencil gave up in despair over Frederick Beecher Perkins' unfoldings of his favorite science of archaeology. She leaned forward in rapt delight over Jessica Thompson's bright Shakesperian papers, and followed with keen pleasure Dr. J. K. McLean

in the story of his perilous descent into the great crater of Mauna Loa. Mr. Adley Cummins' thoughtful picture of what the Orient has done for us, delighted her history-loving taste; and Mrs. Field's "Holy George Herbert" made her more than ever in love with that most devout soul.

The Thurston household did not quite as completely surrender themselves to Chautauqua sway. Mrs. Thurston declared one good lecture a day satisfied her appetite in that line, and Mr. Thurston, though keenly enjoying the intellectual feast, had to set some metes and bounds to his journeyings, while Fred confined his patronage largely to Dr. Wythe's microscopic talks and Prof. Keep's seaside lessons in conchology. Where eye and hand could be active as well as brain, and especially where the "sun and the sand and the wild uproar" could be included in the schoolroom, there the boy's faculties were joyously alive.

And so the Assembly ran on almost to the end. The San Benito Chautauquans had an unlimited good time. The simple outdoor life

brought with it a return to unconventional and wholesome customs. They forgot to be afraid of each other's criticisms, and a spirit of freedom and good comradery reigned supreme. How restful it was to tired housewives like Mrs. Brooks and Mrs. Leib ! What a lesson it was to them all in the possibility of "plain living and high thinking" !

One afternoon they had a Round Table all by themselves, and their young President brought her note-book and told them of a wonderful lecture she heard at the Assembly the year before, upon "Work and Play," by the Rev. Dr. Fiske, then of San Francisco. It had made such an impression upon her that she could repeat almost verbatim the glowing sentences describing man's complex nature, his splendid equipment, his imperial powers of body and soul, and then the speaker's beautiful portrayal of the joy man should take both in work and play ; how each is complementary to the other, how impossible for either to be well done without the other. She held up Dr. Fiske's picture of life in a camp among the redwoods; of its hunting,

fishing and tramping; of the relish for food and the delicious sleep on the bed of ferns and pine needles which he had painted so vividly—all so intensely enjoyed because it came in vacation time after a year of hard work.

They gave her a Chautauqua salute when she had finished, because, as they said, no doubt the lecture was better than at first hand.

"I like such a lecture out under the sky," said Mr. Leib. "I like this idea of 'work and play.' Just now I do very much like the play. I think I never did have such year of work, all-round *work*, and now I know I never did have such time of play."

On Saturday our Chautauquans made up two overflowing omnibus loads and took "the long drive," as it is always called in Monterey. Eighteen miles of perfect road winding by the coast, sometimes with the great pines almost meeting overhead, and sometimes on the open beach among the sand dunes. It is always within hearing of the mighty voice of old ocean, and most of the way one looks out over the wild waste of waters conscious that here is no pent-up

bay, but the wide, illimitable sea. White-breasted gulls flew airily back and forth over the heads of the party, and great seals swam in the boiling surf around rocky islands, filling the air with their hoarse clamor. At famous Cypress Point they took their noonday lunch under those stately trees whose antiquity no man can measure, and whose gnarled trunk and strange dark foliage seem like a survival from some prehistoric world. They noted the ashen gray hue of their boles and the dull red color which lighted the under side of the limbs.

“Embers in ashes,” one said,—a most fitting comparison.

Leaving the weird and gloomy cypress they turned eastward toward sunny and beautiful Carmel Bay, where the softest and warmest sunshine lay on the pebbly beach, and the ripples crept back and forth with sweet whisperings,—a wonderful contrast to Cypress Point with its thunderous waves, like a hidden, peaceful life in a stormy world.

And at last, as the sun dropped down towards the shining sea, they turned homeward through

the forest again. It had been a day of deep and satisfying pleasure to them all—a flawless picture to hang in memory's long gallery.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Thurston had felt quite equal to the long ride and so had enjoyed, as they reported to Kate and Fred, the most charming of picnics in their own little favorite cove near Lovers' Point.

"I'm afraid you kept some young folks out in the cold," remarked Fred, with a boy's jocoseness over such matters.

"I'd have you to know, sir," retorted the father, "that young folks haven't any monopoly on the Point or the Cove, or the article from which they took their name! Besides if mother and I aren't young folks now-a-days, where will you find specimens of youth?" and he tweaked Fred's ear till that young man, whose mouth chanced to be too full for utterance, was fain to nod a vigorous assent.

The second week of the Assembly was past meridian. Friday was to be Recognition Day and the end of the session. The graduates were to give the Chapel some extra decorations on

the eventful morning, and on Thursday evening after tea Kate took her needle and thread and a basket of scarlet geraniums out on the front steps of their cottage and began to sew the blossoms on some large pasteboard figure eights, which she had taken as her part in the date line to be placed under their class name in the floral decorations. The tent-door stood open and her father and mother sat just within, enjoying, like Abram of old, the fading day and the quiet hour. A carriage stopped at the gate and a gentleman whom Kate knew instantly, sprang out and, leaving the lines in the hands of a lady who was with him, came directly in. Kate's apron was full of geraniums and her cheeks seemed to reflect their color in a way not wholly explainable on any scientific theory, but she put out her hand in real pleasure, for how often, oh, how often ! she had wondered during these two weeks what could have become of him.

“Good evening, Dr. Hall,” she said cordially.
“If I were not so flower-fettered, I would rise.”
“Becoming fetters !” he said, looking in her bright face with just his old friendliness.

Then he was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Thurston, and in a moment more he was saying :

"My mother is in the carriage ; we have just driven over from Del Monte, and if you will allow me I will bring her in. Miss Thurston and I have been such friends and allies during the past year our mothers should surely be acquainted."

And so, just as gracefully, and with as much apparent ease as if they were in a beautiful parlor, these gentlefolk were soon all chatting together. The young people sat on the steps while the elder ones were a little farther back. Dr. Hall gave Kate a rapid sketch of his engrossing cares of the preceding fortnight and thus cleared up the mystery of his disappearance, and she gave him a merry account of the cramming process to which she had been subjecting herself.

"Don't you notice it?" she laughed. "The air is just foggy with information over here. We're, as one might say, briny with Attic salt. But I must keep right on with my work or they won't let me graduate to-morrow. These *eights*

must all be there to testify to our four years of work," and she fell to pulling off the great double flowers and fastening them in place.

"Why I can do that," said Dr. Hall, "at least I can pick off the flowers," and he drew nearer and began to render what Kate called "valuable professional service."

Suddenly they were aware that the conversation behind them was growing very animated:

"And so you were the Will Thurston I knew so well!" said Mrs. Hall eagerly.

"And you were the little Mary Belford! Let us shake hands over again!" exclaimed Mr. Thurston. "Katie dear, come right here and see somebody I knew when I was a boy!"

At almost the same time Mrs. Hall was saying:

"Philip, come and shake hands again with Mr. Thurston; he was a schoolmate of mine; his mother and mine were dear friends, and his sister Kate and I were quite inseparable. Ah, the dear old days!"

So Philip and Kate came dutifully forward

and a general re-handshaking was indulged in with a great access of cordiality.

"I felt sure our friendship was inherited or something," said Dr. Hall, looking at Kate with an expression half droll, half serious, to which she smiled a sort of limited response and then drew a camp chair close to her father and listened with deepest interest to the rapid interchange of question and answer as he and Mrs. Hall talked of the days of their youth. Mrs. Thurston listened as sympathetically.

There was nothing left for Dr. Hall but to watch the beaming, responsive face which had grown to be the one face in the world for him.

Pretty soon the bell began to ring for the evening lecture and Dr. Hall rose :

"Well, mother," he said, "I shall have to carry you away from this delightful re-union or Miss Thurston will lose another golden opportunity for mental advancement."

"How absurd!" said Kate. "Do stay, Mrs. Hall; the lecture will really go on without me."

"Doubtless," said Dr. Hall gravely. "The question is, can you go on without the lecture?"

Mrs. Hall rose. "Yes, we must go," she said, "we have quite over-stayed our time. When we came we were not at all sure we could even find your daughter, but we have been fortunate indeed! Now, when shall we meet again? We must make the most of this wayside encounter."

"To-morrow," said Dr. Hall, promptly. "Miss Thurston is to graduate to-morrow, and we must all be ready with our congratulations."

Mrs. Hall looked puzzled and poor Kate distressed.

"Oh, this is too bad," she cried. "Please do not come! Why, I really have something to do. I shall be greatly embarrassed," and the usually brave girl felt her eyes filling.

The lovely elder woman put her arm around the younger one and kissed the flushed and troubled face: "My dear child," she said, "you must never be afraid of me again, not the least bit; I am your true warm friend forever and ever."

What more could be said or done? Kate stayed at home from the lecture that night and finished her "eights," and conned her little

"piece" over and over by the flaring candle which was their only means of lighting.

The depth of the good breeding in the little tent was shown by the fact that not one of them spoke of the shabbiness of their little dwelling place and the elegance of the dress and manner of their guest. They simply talked on until late at night of the happy old times, the loveliness of Mary Belford, and the fortunate discovery of the old acquaintance.

"The good hand of our God is over us all," said Mr. Thurston with fervent gratitude.

And the good breeding in the carriage was shown by its inmates never once alluding to the plainness of the little tent they had visited, with its bare floor and primitive furnishings. They, too, talked of dear young friendships which after forty years needed but a breath to renew their glowing warmth, and of the beautiful refinement and culture of these old new friends.

"That is indeed a charming girl, Philip. I don't wonder you have written of her loveliness. If something more than friendship should come

to you two, your mother will be more than pleased," said the soft voice of her who had been to Philip Hall from his babyhood his best and most trusted adviser.

" You have guessed my secret, mother dear," he said.

Poor Kate's night was abbreviated at both ends for she had to be up early in the morning to help set the little room in faultless order before going up to put the finishing touch to the flowers in the Chapel. It was with nervous hands she put on her simple best dress of dark blue cashmere. Her figure was straight and slender and the gown had as few "catch-ups" as the style would possibly permit. She had no frills or furbelows of any sort, just an edge of white linen at throat and wrists and a bunch of scarlet geraniums in her belt. Her lovely brown hair was brushed smoothly back and piled in a lustrous coil on the top of her shapely head, and her only "frizzes" were the airy little rings with which nature had insisted on framing her broad full forehead. As she stood before the tiny looking-glass settling her pretty little black



straw turban, with its becoming dark blue velvet trimming just matching her gown, and its one bright bit of color, a scarlet wing, just matching her flowers, she was indeed a pleasant sight to parental eyes, and even the most critical on-looker would have had to search for fault or flaw. But she had rather a perturbed spirit. How could she ever face that great audience which she knew the commencement exercises would be sure to call out? And oh, if certain other faces should be there, how could she ever endure their intent gaze as she struggled through her poor dear little poem? Yes, it must be confessed, "it" was a poem. Her heart throbbed wildly at the thought, and she really feared that with a frantic clutch and gasp she might, at the critical moment, sink down upon the platform, a poor crumpled heap of failure and dismay!

Her mother and father were coming an hour later, at just the time to secure good seats, and now they were quietly and calmly brushing off Monterey sand and picking off Monterey burrs from their Sunday garments, without a thought

of poor Kate's misery. She hardly dared to speak to them lest she should break down in a most girlish fashion, and there was a pathetic tremble in voice and lip as at last she said simply :

“ Oh dear, I am so frightened ! ”

“ Why, my precious Katie ! ” said her mother, coming forward sympathetically to kiss her, but her father who knew her mood perfectly and remembered well his own early “ stage-frights,” had some good advice :

“ See here, Katie,” he said cheerily, “ try not to think about yourself at all till you are called for, and then whenever you raise your eyes from your paper you look straight at me, and just think of me; you know what your old father —young father, I mean—thinks about both you and your poem. You just *read it to me*. Mother and I will be in our usual places, third seat back in the middle row.”

Just then Fred burst in and it seemed after all that he knew best of any of them what to say, for he threw his hat into the air and seizing Kate by the arms swung her round into full view.

"My, but isn't she pretty?" he cried with genuine enthusiasm, "and isn't she nice? and isn't she smart? and isn't she sweet? and when she 'speaks her piece' to-day, won't we be proud of her though? *You bet!*"

"Fred! Fred!" cried his father in attempted disapprobation, but the whole room seemed freshened with his young life and fun, and Kate herself broke out in silvery laughter which was vastly better than the tears which had been impending.

She drew on her gloves and giving the family a parting kiss all around she hurried up to the Chapel with her basket of figures and flowers. She took her favorite path along the beach and drew in long deep breaths of the pure briny air. She even took time to step out on a jutting point and let her thoughts follow a gull on its oceanward flight. "Ah, my heart," she thought, "how like the troubled sea thou art!"

One of her favorite hymns flitted through her mind like a message from heaven :

"Calm me, my God, and keep me calm."

She clasped her hands over her basket of

flowers, and made the hymn a prayer indeed, while the Peace of God stole over spirit and face. Her path to the Chapel led her through the San Benito settlement, and here she was captured instantly by a bevy of admirers. The elder ones smiled their approbation while the younger people complimented her more openly.

“She’s a blue-bird !” cried little John Leib, with a child’s quick perception of color.

“She surely doesn’t look like a blue-stocking,” said a young lady.

Kate held up a warning finger : “Now please don’t say another word about your school-ma’am,” she said, “but come up and join the procession at ten o’clock, and be sure to sit where you generally do so that I may know where to look if my courage fails,” and she hastened on her way to the Chapel, where she found the decorators already at work, and flowers, flowers everywhere ! They banked the platform with lavish hands, they filled vases and bowls, they heaped them in gorgeous beauty around the little reading desk, and then laid them along the beams with a profusion which

at any point east of the Rocky Mountains would have looked like reckless extravagance. A member of the class from Oregon who could not be present sent the name of the '84's, "The Irrepressibles," made in large letters of brilliant autumn leaves, and this was put up against a white background at the rear of the platform. The class dates in scarlet geraniums, 1880-1884, completed the whole.

Kate forgot everything but the beauty as she ran here and there, now steadyng a rickety step-ladder or passing up tacks to some one perched aloft, and now deftly putting bouquets in effective places. At last it was all done and every trace of the doing process removed.

"Eden's bower!" cried Kate in happy satisfaction over the result; "Eden's bower, enriched by the modern Chautauqua idea!"

Then they all hurried over to join the Chautauqua procession which was forming at the C. L. S. C. office. They were delighted to find that their President, the Rev. Dr. Stratton, had at last arrived on the grounds to take charge of his flock, and soon he was among them greeting

old friends and making new ones in his own happy way. Kate had marshaled her Chautauquans in the Class of '87 and then took her own modest place among the '84's. How proud she felt of them all ! There was Dr. Anderson's good gray head leading the Class, arm in arm with the President, who himself was an '84. They were honored indeed. And there in the class, too, was Dr. Wythe, the great scientist ; and the Pacific Coast Treasurer, with her fair, intellectual face aglow with pleasure ; there were only a dozen of them, this Class of '84, who could be present, and most of them were a great deal older than our heroine, but her heart gave them a big tribute of love and admiration. She walked beside one who was silver haired but blest with immortal youth, and as they talked together they decided that Chautauqua was like the Kingdom of Heaven in its ignoring of ordinary distinctions.

The program at the Hall moved on without a flaw. Kate was so glad that the Secretary's usual contribution from her note-book made them all laugh rather than cry ; she felt so much

more like the latter most unsuitable and unbecoming performance.

Then the graduates' essays followed, and poor Kate's hands began to grow cold, but she resolutely gave her attention to the readers and was pleased indeed with all, but specially with Mrs. Duyden's beautiful sketch of the Cary sisters, who were her old friends and neighbors in their youth.

Miss Thurston's name was called and that unmanageable heart of hers gave a wild throb, but she went bravely forward and upon the platform; then true to her resolution made her graceful bow to her father. But how could she help seeing the lovely placid face of Mrs. Hall close beside him, and the unmistakable fine manly presence beside her, and next to him a beautiful young woman wearing eye-glasses!

Then a miracle happened—not a very uncommon miracle, either. Kate's tense nerves became suddenly firm; her heart kept its place and grew quiet in its movements, and when she opened her lips her voice was just as smooth and sweet as if she had been in her schoolroom.

Somehow her self vanished and only her theme stood before her. It was so with her hearers too. They forgot the lovely young maiden standing there among the flowers and heard the dash of northern seas and the chime of monas-
tery bells as she read her poem of

CÆDMON.

Sweet is the story of Cædmon and full of the deepest sug-
gestion,
Cædmon, the Saxon herdman, first of our English
singers.
Old are the annals which tell it, and rescued from many a
peril,
Chronicles faithful and beautiful, kept by Beda the aged.
Dust for a thousand years has been the good hand which
wrote them,
Still will they live and be cherished when a thousand more
have been numbered.

Dimly we see him afar leading his flocks like young
David,
Like him, too, ruddy and fair, with the yellow hair of the
Saxon
Circling his bright young head with his saint-like and
beautiful aureole.
Only a peasant lad, herding the kine of the convent,
Where on its cliff by the sea nestled the cloister of Whitby,
Or dwelling with them on the heights of the barren hills
of Northumbria.
Homeless and nameless he comes into the pages of history,
Poor and untaught and alone but brave and fearless and
hardy,
Child of the mighty mother who fairly deals with her
children,
Giving the poor and the friendless ever her rich compen-
sations.

Daily he read from a book better than that of the schoolmen,
For ever around him unfolded the pages which no man can number,
Pages of mountain and meadow, glebe-land and forest unbroken ;
Ever before him stretched also the infinite reaches of ocean ;
Ever its voice called aloud and the heart of the youth throbbed responsive.
Sunshine and storm alike welcome were good to the young heart that loved them,
Snow and frost-flowers of winter, rain and blossoms of summer.
Close to the heart-beats of nature dwelt he all unaffrighted,
Warm and bright was his life with youth and with innocent pleasure,
Clear and alert was his brain, untangled with logical subtleties,
Sweet was his voice and untrained like the notes of the merle and the mavis,
Friendly and kind was his heart, yearning for love and for sympathy.
But when on the winter hearth the mighty yule log burned cheerily,
Or on the midsummer night fires gleamed on the moor and the mountain,
Or young men and maidens on May-day danced round the gaily wreathed May-pole,
Ever among his companions wandered he lonely and separate,
Ever far off looked his eyes, and his voice had a tone of appealing.

And when in the banqueting hall men crowded for boisterous wassail,
Quaffing the high-foaming ale-cup with clamorous jesting and laughter,
And loud sang the bards and the gleemen wild ballads of war and of rapine,
Vainly they urged him to join them, his heart was unstirred by their madness.

Filled instead was his soul with bitterest shame and confusion,
And often he silently rose and stole away from their tumult.
Better, far better he loved the chanting he heard in the convent,
Where mid the monks and the nuns ruled the wise abbess St. Hilda.
Dear to the heart of the youth were the wonderful words of the Gospel,
As he oft heard them unfolded by Cuthbert the holy apostle,
Reading the heavenly words from the precious book of the Abbey,
Bound in the purest of gold and jeweled with marvelous sapphires ;
The tale of the mystical life which made all life worthy of living ;
How poor and friendless and homeless lived the divine Man of sorrows,
And listening the youth was aware how toil and want are made sacred.
Dear beyond words to his heart were the hymns of the matins and vespers.
Rapt and exultant he joined in the heavenly song of the shepherds :
"Peace to men of good-will, and glory to God in the highest!"
Hasted he ever at dawn to kneel in the aisle of the minster
While clear and high rose the anthem, *Eterne rerum conditum* ;
And when the day's toil was ended bowed in deep adoration
Thrilled with the cadences soft of the old even song *Nunc dimittis* ;
Then when the last tender echo died away through the cloisters
Silently turned his steps homeward with thoughts which vaguely oppressed him,
Conscious of power all unused and full of an infinite longing.

Thus went the months and the years in lowliest, faith-
fulest service

Till the fair hair of the youth faded from gold into silver,
And the young heart had grown old, still with its burden
unspoken.

At length it befell on a day when far and near gathered
for feasting,

All day there was riot and revel and deeper it grew with
the nightfall;

Louder and fiercer and madder rang the wild din of the
ale-poets,

Sadder and fuller of loathing grew the pure heart of the
herdman.

Then one thrust the harp toward him and passed him the
o'erflowing beaker:

"Sing to us, sing now, thou churlish one!" shouted the
drunken carousers.

Then he arose pale and trembling with passion of shame
and of sorrow,

Threw down the harp and the ale-horn and fled out afar
in the darkness,

Stole away to the fold where the quiet cattle lay sleeping,
Made his rude bed in their midst and sought to grow
calm in the stillness.

Over his head moved the stars drifting in solemn pro-
cession,

And thoughts of the great Over-Father drifted across his
soul's heaven

While gently the soft dews of sleep distilled with the
dews of the even.

Suddenly down from the sky there floated a heavenly
vision,

Stood by his side there a being radiant with glory in-
effable,

And, speaking with gracious entreaty, "Sing to me,"
pleaded the angel.

"Nay, but I cannot sing," murmured the sleeper most
sadly,

"Fled I not hither but now to 'scape from the plea of my
brothers?"

Still urged the sweet voice its message, "Canst thou not sing at MY bidding?"
Then helpless and humble and fearing, low prostrate in full self-surrender,
He fell at the feet of the Presence, crying, "What shall I sing, Oh my Master?"
"Sing me Creation!" He whispered, then vanished in slow-rising brightness.

Then out of the heart of the dreamer the swift words o'erflowed, like the waters Which thunder and beat on the cliffs when the north wind drives them before it, And the soul of the poet new-born broke forth into jubilant singing.

Waking at dawning the herdman still throbbed with the wonderful music And fled with tumultuous joy to Hilda the faithful and reverent. "Haste to the Chapel!" she cried ; then summoned her counselors thither. Long they listened enraptured, wondering, questioning, believing, Praising God for His grace, as hymn followed hymn from the singer. Then with joyful acclaiming they gave a new name to the herdman, Christened him Cædmon, Cædmon, the newly created, Chosen by Heaven to sing them the glorious song of Creation.

Slowly arose the dear Abbess, the noble, the beautiful Hilda, Pale and awe-struck and trembling, her heart and her eyes overflowing, Laid her white hand like a snowflake on the dark palm of the herdman, Led him abashed and reluctant up to her velvet-draped dais, There in tones laden with prophecy crowned him her poet forever.

Long lived the heaven-taught Cædmon, ever the joy of
the convent;
Comfort and teaching and blessing brought he to cloister
and hamlet.
Never in aught did he fall from the height of his first in-
spiration;
Ever he honored the gift but ever remembered the Giver;
Ever was lowly in spirit and consecrated to heaven;
Till white haired and burdened with years. Then again
came the Shining One to him,
Whispering one even at vespers, "Sing me thy matins in
heaven!"
And they who sought him at morning found that else-
where was his waking.

Sweet is thy story, O Cædmon, and full of the deepest
suggestion.
Vain to the heart of the poet is all his wild stress and en-
deavor,
Vain the fine frenzy of passion, the infinite dreaming and
longing,
Till on his soul prone and helpless descendeth the Soul of
the universe
With the mandate divine and resistless which fell on the
singer of Whitby.

Beautiful music followed, and then Dr. Stratton talked in his fine comprehensive way of what a Chautauqua diploma means—not a college degree, but something better: a resolute effort for self-culture; a steadfast purpose to gain a higher intellectual standpoint and a broader outlook, and the achievement of this end.

The precious diplomas were then given to the class, and it was all over.

Friends hastened forward with congratulations, and Kate found herself surrounded. She gave her two hands first to her father and mother, and then before her friends from Del Monte could reach her, she shook hands right and left with her Chautauquans, who showered their loving commendation upon her ; one half-reproachful word of Mr. Leib's being the only unfavorable criticism :

“ Ah, Miss Kate ! You should not haf made me cry right here before efery body telling about that poor poet-boy ! ” Kate never forgot that simple honest tribute.

Dr. Hall had brought his mother forward and Kate turned to them with heightened color but with all her natural modest grace, to be almost taken in Mrs. Hall's arms, while her son put out his hand with pleasant conventional words, and then made himself unaffectedly cordial with the San Benito people.

Mrs. Hall drew Kate toward the young lady whose eye-glasses had once proved so disconcerting, and whom Kate's fancy had unhesitatingly placed as Dr. Hall's *fiancée* :

"Miss Thurston," she said, "my niece, Miss Grant. Genevieve, this is the young lady who has given us so much pleasure, and the daughter of my dear old friend."

Miss Grant smiled and bowed graciously, even put out her little hand and murmured a soft word or two of appreciation, but she could not quite forget that here was a product of the wild West, and therefore to be looked upon with slight suspicion till further developments should follow.

Mrs. Hall said more kind things of Kate's poem, and then as they hastened to their waiting carriage she spoke urgently :

"My dear, I hope you and your father and mother can join us in an excursion to Carmel Mission to-morrow. You must be very tired, but we have to leave Monterey on Monday, and I must have a day with you all. I have been talking with your mother about it. Your brother must go too; I claim you all as my guests."

Kate cheerfully promised to aid the project, although she still felt the chill of her encounter

with Miss Grant. She was warmly thanking Mrs. Hall for the invitation, when another voice beside her said : " If I come over this evening, can you give me the pleasure of a little walk by the sea ? "

" Why, yes, I think so," said Kate, with another of those mantling blushes which other people thought vastly pretty but which to her were a source of great distress.

The carriage whirled away and Kate at last was seized by Fred : " Let's hurry home ahead of father and mother," he said ; " I'm just too awfully hungry to wait another minute. What are we going to have for lunch, anyway ? Is there any of the boiled ham left ? "

And so Kate descended to earth.

There was a charming Round Table on the beach that afternoon where Chautauqua experiences were interchanged, and stories told, and toasts responded to, and where the utmost good fellowship reigned. A huge fire of drift-wood was built and Monterey mussels in unlimited number met with the sad fate of their cousins on the Atlantic coast at a clam-bake. It

was all very pleasant and no end of good things were said and done, but Kate was just a trifle *distract* and not quite so full of bright thought and suggestion as was her wont. They all excused her on the ground of over-fatigue, and no one guessed what made her knit her brows a little and look far out to sea.

They sat on the shining sand and chatted socially between the varied exercises in the most informal way, but as the sun dropped downward they were called to order and stood with bowed heads while Dr. Stratton's beautiful voice rose above the breaking of the waves in an earnest closing prayer.

The summer Assembly was over.

CHAPTER XI. ON LOVERS' POINT.

OUR heroine as usual hurried home. Her brother Fred had been a lively helper at the mussel-roast, not only in the way of securing the delicious bivalves, but in consuming them, and yet Kate knew that he would be entirely ready for an early tea. It was made ready and disposed of and Kate had hardly taken off her apron when the tap at the door came for which she had been listening.

Mr. Thurston opened the door and, seeing who was standing there, held the door wide open and cordially begged Dr. Hall to come in, but the young man stood hat in hand, evidently with something else on his mind beside the interchange of salutations or a general sociability :

“Pardon me,” he said, “but if you will give

me the privilege, I have come to carry off Miss Kate for a little stroll on the beach."

Kate had already come forward and with a "Yes, papa, Dr. Hall spoke to me of this at noon, and I will put on my hat directly. I am tired of course, but the sea always rests me."

"To be sure, to be sure," said Mr. Thurston. "She's my own girl. The sea was my first love, Dr. Hall. I grew up with your mother, you know, on old Penobscot Bay."

Kate's hat was adjusted by this time, but her mother drew her aside: "Take this extra shawl," she said, "you know how chilly it grows." The chintz curtain was between them and the door, and she suddenly put both arms around her daughter and pressed her faded cheek against the bright young face: "My darling! my darling!" she said. It was a great deal for her to say.

The young people went slowly toward the beach and stood for a few moments on a rude little foot bridge that spanned a ravine just as it reached the shore. To the eastward the moon was just rising, making a silver pathway across

the bay, which lay rocking in great soft billows scarcely perceptible save when they broke over some rocky point.

"Over there is organ rock," said Kate, "shall we go and listen to the music? It is almost like going to church."

They followed the path along the cliffs, stopping now for a flower or bit of curious lichen, and then to watch the gulls and the beautiful wild ducks that rode the waves in such happy fearlessness. All the time their pleasant talk ran on, of botany and the flora of California, of the rocks and the geology of the coast, of the shells and Prof. Keep's delightful lessons. Kate especially appeared bent on securing more information from her scientific companion, who was to her an embodiment of wisdom, and who indeed was well versed in the best lore of the universities, supplemented by the knowledge gained through keen powers of observation. He made a few weak attempts to stem the tide of scientific talk and to give it a personal turn, but the young woman beside him was strangely coy.

"How happy I am," he said, "over the auld acquaintance of my mother and your father! Indeed I have seldom seen my mother so moved. She can hardly talk of anything else!"

"Yes, indeed," warmly assented Kate. "My father, too, is quite rejuvenated by it. They will greatly enjoy their day together to-morrow. We must plan to have them sit together in riding and have an uninterrupted good time."

"I want to have a good time, too," said the Doctor, with a little air of having been left out in the plan.

"Oh, of course," laughed Kate. "Be good and you will be happy!" Then with rapid transition: "Does your mother enjoy our flowers?"

"Yes," said the Doctor, rather slowly; "Oh, yes, come to think of it; she was saying to-day that the flowers at Del Monte fairly bewildered her with their variety and magnificence."

"And our wild flowers. I hope she has noticed them," said Kate. "They are so different from the Eastern ones, I am told; even

where they are the same species they will be a law unto themselves, like our people. Now look at this lupine ; how it has changed from the lupine of New England ! ”

This was a pet subject with the doctor—the morphology of plants—and he was beguiled into quite a discussion of the wonderful way in which plants traveled into new zones, throwing out a woolen coat here, a coat of varnish there, and stiffening into woody shrubs where strong winds were to be buffeted. Kate’s fancy seized the idea joyfully and she drew a charming picture of little Lady Lupine on her Western pilgrimage.

“ Now I call that a prose-poem,” said her companion. “ How capable it would be of artistic illustration ! Ah, you have only to look at the things about your feet to find themes for poems or for pictures ! ”

“ You do not know how I liked your ‘ Cædmon.’ I could not say anything before all those people, but it moved me very much. I did not know you wrote poetry, though I might have known that one whose life was so like ‘ the

measure of a blessed hymn' ought to think in poetry."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" she said, "but I cannot let you so over-estimate me. I am more prosaic than you fancy. Most of my thoughts are too practical for belief.

"See, here we are at our *ultima thule*!"

So Organ Rock was reached and our friends climbed up on the great pile of rocks which overlooks the whole of Monterey Bay. The tide was coming in and each succeeding wave seemed higher than its predecessor. Far out in the bay they could see a wave marshaling its forces like a long line of battle; slowly it moved forward, all the little billows giving way before it; near and nearer, high and higher, till with thunderous crash it broke against the mighty buttresses of the shore.

"Let us go far out on the cliffs into the very heart of the wild uproar," said the young man, his pulses thrilling with the great spectacle; and Kate very willingly suffered herself to be led out to the promontory's verge.

With each shock of the waves the cliffs

trembled, and somewhere beneath them there was a long reverberating roar like the bass notes of a great organ. Far to the westward the ocean stretched away till it met the line of the sky which still glowed with the opaline hues of sunset. They seemed surrounded with the Infinite and to be a part of it.

With that majestic music thundering in their ears, and with the very rock beneath them trembling with the fierce onset of the waves, how could the young man speak of what was in his heart? He spread his overcoat on the rocks, wrapped Kate's shawl about her, and they sat in reverent silence for quite a while.

The spray fell about them in a fine mist at first, but they disregarded it in the delight of watching the wild shock of battle, but soon a briny down-pour of a far damper sort drove them back laughing.

“ Ah !” cried Kate, “ we are cowards :

‘ Some of thy firm unyielding might,
Enduring still through day and night
Rude tempest shock and withering blight,
That I may keep at bay
The changeful April sky of chance
And the strong tide of circumstance,
Give me, old granite gray ! ’ ”

And so they turned backward, retracing their steps along the beach. The excitement of the day was still in Kate's blood and the stimulus of the encounter with the waves was thrilling her nerves. Her companion thought she never was more brilliant and versatile, and almost before they knew it they were at the little cove known as "Chautauqua Beach," where the festivities of the afternoon had gone on. Here Kate paused and described the mussel-roast, repeating the bright speeches, and making the little cove alive again in her usual vivid style.

The Doctor listened with polite external interest but with a disturbed spirit. Did she purposely divert him in this way? She could not but know what he was longing to say. It must be that he was not necessary to her as she to him. He was on the verge of despair. She had never seemed so remote and elusive.

"What do you call that pretty point out there?" he asked half listlessly, at a little pause in Kate's gay description.

"That?" she asked following the westward pointing of his hand. "Oh, that,"—and the

warm blood mounted to her white temples—
“that is Lovers’ Point.”

He suddenly drew near her. “Oh Kate!” he said, “I cannot endure another hour of suspense. I must know my fate. Can you truly? Will you really go out with me on Lovers’ Point?”

She bent a moment like a wind-swept flower and then she put out both her hands:

“Yes, I will go with you,” she said, simply and finally.

The evening star came out and looked at them approvingly as arm in arm they sauntered on past the rustic outlook building with its tempting seats, on to the familiar Point, and then out on its well worn path. Here they encountered Kate’s brother Fred whom they greeted cordially and sent on homeward with the message that they were coming presently. But Dr. Hall was blissfully intent upon going to the utmost verge of Lovers’ Point, and Kate could not say him nay. Indeed she had grown very silent and it was her lover’s turn to talk in low and earnest tones upon that subject of which the shyest maiden never tires.

And so their young lives entered that "new world which is the old."

Meanwhile Fred went home rather solemnly for him, and when he had reached that little habitation he went in and then actually hung up his hat. Then he sat down and carefully delivered his message, but he added, "I met them away out on Lovers' Point, and truly they looked for all the world like a lover and loveress!"

CHAPTER XII.

AT CARMEL MISSION.

WHATEVER embarrassment Kate might naturally have felt in laying before her family the experiences and results of that memorable walk was greatly relieved by the frank and triumphant boldness of the conquering hero. He brought the dear girl home in due season,

“ All kind of smiliey round the lips
And teary round the lashes,”

and found Mr. and Mrs. Thurston sitting together by the cheerful blaze of pine cones in the little Franklin stove. Dr. Hall put his arm around Kate and came forward hat in hand; then, without any preliminaries, half begged, half claimed the parental approbation and blessing.

There could be but one answer to such a petition.

Of course there had to be a little subsequent visiting, but very soon Dr. Hall rose to leave :

"Ah, well," he said, "I must not forget how long and full this day has been to you all and that, as our Spanish friends say, 'to-morrow brings another day.' I hope I am not so completely intoxicated with my happiness that I shall walk into the bay on my way to Del Monte! My mother's appointment with you is for ten o'clock, I think? We shall be here promptly. I feel impatient already."

Kate went with him to the door—yes, out to the gate, of course—and as he kissed her good-night he said, "I may tell my mother this very night, may I not?" and she whispered, "Yes, yes, I seem unable to say anything but 'yes' to you to-night."

"I will test you," he said, with gay daring. "Let us be married to-morrow over at the Old Mission by your father!"

"No, no, no!" cried Kate, quite in her usual fashion, "and now go directly away, you presumptuous youth, or I shall revoke all my yeses."

Then he really did go, and Kate went back to kiss her father and mother and cry a little more.

Saturday was a true Monterey day with a high fog obscuring the sun and giving the sea and the landscape that soft gray setting which one soon learns to appreciate as a restful and beautiful change.

In the little tent everybody was trying to be sweet and reasonable except Fred. He had been wrapped in oblivion the evening before during Dr. Hall's call, and this morning was taken into the family confidence by his mother. He now stoutly maintained that the whole proceeding was uncalled for and undesirable from every point of view. Kate had to take him in hand herself and assert that no coercion whatever had been used with her, and that, on the contrary, she had acted according to the dictates of her heart and judgment, and moreover that the state of affairs was by no means unprecedented. She succeeded so well that he presented his usual cheerful front, enhanced by a most painstaking toilet, when the carriage arrived at ten o'clock.

Dr. Hall ran in with a freedom which was as delightful as it was new.

"Good morning," he said, with the brightest of faces ; "may I bring my mother and cousin in for a moment, Mrs. Thurston?" Then *sotto voce* to Kate, "Say yes, do, please, Kate, and break the dreadful spell of fear under which I am laboring!"

"Yes, indeed," they both replied, and in a moment Mrs. Hall had Kate in her arms :

"My daughter!" she said, kissing her warmly; "My daughter! I never had the privilege of saying that sweet phrase before. I am afraid I shall want to keep saying it all the time to-day."

And then Genevieve came forward with genuine effort to be informal and cordial. It was remarkably becoming to her, and Kate saw for the first time how pleasing, when the occasion justified it, a young lady of that aristocratic type could be.

For herself she could respond to all this only with blushes and smiles, which, after all, were quite sufficient.

The seats of the comfortable open wagonette

were amply wide for three persons. The elder people had the rear seat, the younger people the middle one, while Fred was delighted to be put with the driver.

Their road took them back to Monterey where they stopped to look at the quaint old adobe houses and especially at the historic places, which the driver pointed out. At the cross which marks the point where the old friars landed in 1770 they paused and gazed with genuine reverence, while Mr. Thurston, who had been making a careful study of early California history, talked with deep appreciation of the holy and self-renouncing zeal which led these devoted missionaries to the new world. They were all familiar with Francis Parkman's noble historical work, "The Jesuits in North America," and recalled its imperishable pictures of Pere Marquette and his confreres, who did a similar work in Canada and among the savage Indian tribes of New York and the Upper Mississippi.

"Our missionary pioneer," said Mr. Thurston, "found here a gentler race of savages and



a far milder climate, but their consecration was as sincere and their labors as untiring."

The driver pointed out the ruins of the old presidio and fort farther up the hill, showing how the friars were prepared to defend themselves from foes who might come by sea and from Christian nations as well as from their inland savage neighbors.

In the town of Monterey they looked with interest at the old adobe barracks where later Spanish or Mexican soldiers had been quartered, and where General Fremont was glad to house his men during his memorable campaign.

They went on and looked at the more modern Roman Catholic church only the foundations of which date back to mission days, but which even this touch of the last century makes venerable. Then they turned and drove southeastward toward Carmel, stopping only for a moment to look at Colton Hall, the famous stone building which Alcalde Colton contrived to get built by the labor of criminals of various degrees, from horse thieves and gamblers down to robbers of hen-roosts, in the days of '46. Mr. Thurston

had just been reading Colton's book, "Three years in California, '46-'49," and for miles on their pleasant drive round the spurs of Carmel Mountain, he entertained his friends, old and young, with the stories of the jovial sailor-parson who came to California as chaplain in the United States frigate *Savannah* in 1846, and so was present at the bloodless taking of Monterey by the conquering Yankee, and was subsequently elected the first Yankee Alcalde of Monterey. This office was a droll combination of Oriental patriarch, Indian chief, and modern mayor, and the Alcalde Colton magnified his office. His pictures of Mexican customs as they prevailed in Monterey, of the primitive life, the friendly, hospitable people, the scenes in his justice's court, and his amusing but excellent decisions, were immensely enjoyed by the picnickers.

About noon they reached the old Mission. The sun was still hiding behind the ocean fog, and so the venerable ruin, environed by the green hills, seemed curtained from the "garish day" by the tender mist.

It was a beautiful and rare picture for America—a veritable ruin. The sun-dried bricks of which the building was built were originally a creamy yellow, while the tile of the roof had been a deep terra cotta, but the sun and the gentle touches of the rain and fog had given the whole a tender olive gray hue. Deserted as it was in the early part of the century, time had crumbled mortar and loosened wooden supports; wind and weather and soft earthquake tremblings had shaken down roof and wall till little was left intact save the old bell-tower, which had stoutly resisted decay.

They all alighted and went around the grass pile, looked in at the deep windows, and with reverent steps entered the door and walked about on the uneven and dust-heaped pavement. They felt they indeed were on holy ground. Here good Padre Juanipero Serra had walked and knelt. Here from this little mound which was once the altar he had ministered to the simple children of the forest whom he loved most earnestly. Here somewhere he died and was buried amid great and heart-felt lamenta-

tion and his dust was lying here beneath his beloved church, waiting for the resurrection.

They looked up in the old bell-tower, now a home for gentle wild doves, and thought how often it had echoed to the soft clangor of the bell calling the *adeste fideles*, and how strange was the throng of worshipers it had summoned, a poor race of gentle heathen whose civilization never reached a point where they did not easily slip back into savagery and whose theology, spite of all the good friar's efforts, never was far removed from paganism.

Our friends sat down on the dry yellow grass outside the ruin and talked of the pathos which clings to the whole subject of those early missions.

"Was any real good accomplished, do you think, by all the toil and sacrifice?" asked Dr. Hall.

"Doubtless some poor souls were lifted to higher levels," said Mr. Thurston; "and surely God never suffers any great earnest effort to go unrewarded. No pure, holy, unselfish life is

lived in vain. It is a benediction to itself and to mankind. I hope I shall be a better Christian always for reading the life of Father Serra, with its picture of complete self-renunciation, of heroic endurance, of high faith and courage which conquered pain and sickness, and counted all suffering joy if by any means a soul might be saved. I was continually reminded in reading it of St. Paul: 'In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the wilderness. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.'

"All these things literally made up Father Serra's life as he journeyed from one Mission Station to another, from San Francisco Bay to San Diego."

Kate picked a little blossom that grew at her feet:

“ And still the wilding flowers will bloom,
The golden leaves will fall,
The seasons come, the seasons go,
And God be good to all,”

she softly recited.

“ Ah, true, true, my dear,” Mrs. Hall said.
“ We have only to trust. Both nature and the
written Word teach us the same lesson of the
Eternal Goodness.”

“ I was thinking just now of Longfellow’s
poem, ‘The Bells of San Blas,’ ” said Dr. Hall.
“ I think it is the message which haunts all these
old Mission Campaniles,” and he quoted with
fine feeling and effect :

What say the bells of San Blas
To the ships that southward pass ?

* * * * *

For bells are the voice of the church
They have tones that touch and search
The hearts of young and old.
One sound to all, yet each
Lends a meaning to their speech,
And the meaning is manifold.

They are the voice of the past,
Of an age that is fading fast,
Of a power austere and grand;
When the flag of Spain unfurled
Its folds o’er the western world
And the Priest was lord of the land.

* * * * *

Is then the old faith dead?
They say, and in its stead
 Is some new faith proclaimed,
That we are left to remain
 Naked to sun and rain,
 Unsheltered and ashamed?

The saints, ah, have they grown
Forgetful of their own?
 Are they asleep or dead,
That open to the sky
 Their ruined Missions lie
 No longer tenanted?

Oh bring us back once more
The vanished days of yore,
 When the world with faith was filled.
Bring back the fervid zeal,
 The hearts of fire and steel,
 The hands that believe and build!

Then from our towers again
We will send over land and maln
 Our voices of command,
Like exiled kings who return
 To their thrones, and the people learn
 That the Priest is lord of the land.

Oh bells of San Blas, in vain
Ye call back the past again,
 The past is deaf to your prayer.
Out of the shadows of night
 The world rolls into the light,
 It is daybreak everywhere!

No one seemed ready to go but Fred who had been obscurely signaling his sister for some minutes ere the driver respectfully called to them that Carmel Bay was still some distance beyond. So they rose and moved slowly away

with many a thoughtful backward glance. There was a majesty about the crumbling ruin lying there in utter loneliness that impressed each heart. They seemed to be going softly out of a room where one lay with folded hands and sealed lips waiting the eternal morning.

Genevieve Grant had been busying herself with a sketch of the scene which she now showed them. It pleased Kate wonderfully, for it not only showed the trained eye and hand but had caught the spirit of the place, and it brought the two girls nearer to each other.

They drove on through enchanting scenery and ere long the blue water shone in the distance and Carmel Bay was before them. There they made preparations for a longer stay. Cushions and fur robes, of which Mrs. Hall had ordered a double portion, were spread under a great oak, with all the charming landscape and seascape in full view.

“How sheltered and warm it seems with this sunny southern exposure!” said Mrs. Thurston, who often found herself shivering at Pacific Grove.

"What a pity that Del Monte isn't here!" said Mrs. Hall. "I think that the Mission Fathers were wiser in their generation than even the Southern Pacific Railroad."

"Well, I'm glad we're here instead of at Del Monte!" said Dr. Hall.

The luxurious lunch was spread on a large red cloth placed on the grass. With the help of a spirit lamp a delicious pot of tea was brewed, and all enjoyed the feast.

Mr. Thurston and Mrs. Hall told stories of old-time picnics, and clam-bakes, and fishing parties on the other side of the continent, and if to their own hearts there was a continual undertone of sadness over the memories of change and death, they were too kind and wise to throw any shadows over the young lives which to-day were so happy in hope and love.

By and by the young people very naturally drifted away from the elder ones. Genevieve and Fred had grown friendly and went together to search among the pebbles of the beach for shining treasures, while Dr. Hall and Kate strolled on down a woodland path to gather

mariposa lilies which grew in splendid clusters in the open glades—floral butterflies, their white wings spotted with royal purple, poising on their delicate stems as if for an aërial flight.

Did they walk beneath the oaks and pines of Carmel Bay and gather mariposa lilies? Nay, they walked in the old, old garden, and the lilies were those of paradise.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAST ROUND TABLE.

THAT evening found our young people again walking by the sea at Pacific Grove. They had begun to plan a little for their future, although this was novel and trying work for Kate who was far more accustomed to plan for others.

“We will have a year or two of Europe pretty soon, I hope. I must have a winter in Paris for study,” said Dr. Hall, and Kate, to whose young imagination the art and architecture of the Old World had always seemed an unattainable dream, thrilled with delight, and then with a rebound thought of the wide separation from home and friends with almost a shudder.

“‘Where thou goest I will go,’ ” she said gently, but her heart whispered another Scripture cry, “alas, my father.”

“You know, dear,” the voice of her com-

panion went on, "I came to California and San Benito only to build up after my long years of study, when I was not wise enough to remember that I had a body as well as a brain, and now I feel restless to try a somewhat wider sphere than that little town, upon which, however," he added suddenly, "be blessings forevermore."

"Oh, I'm very glad you remembered to say that, Philip!" laughed Kate. Then more soberly she said, "My dear Chautauquans! How I shall miss them, if we go away!"

"How they will miss you!" he rejoined. "I really dread to face them. I fear they will load me with undeserved reproaches. It is so impossible in this world to be unselfish. I plead guilty to the basest selfishness myself," and he pressed her arm closer. "I am so happy over your promise to my mother to have our wedding day before she goes home in September, that I am willing to confess to any crime the Chautauquans may charge me with in the heat of their first displeasure!"

"You absurd boy!" said Kate. "They'll

not be displeased at all. Are we not to spend this winter in San Benito? We needn't tell them about our castles in Spain."

"Ah, the subtleties of woman!" exclaimed the young man. "Now I am so transparent I was going to take them all into my confidence. Thanks for your bright suggestion! I feel so bold now that I would like to face these Chautauquans before I lose my ardor," and he drew Kate, a little shy and reluctant, toward the San Benito settlement.

They found that quite a number of the Chautauquans had already gone home, but the Brooks and the Leib families still remained with a few others, and now were gathered in the dining tent reading the *San Benito Star*. Our young people were greeted with the usual warmth, but although every one tried to look unconscious and unsuspicious, there was just a shade of expectancy in some of the faces, a sort of covert is-it-all-settled? air, which sent the color signals flying to Kate's cheek. They took the proffered seats which were urged upon them and joined the circle.

"I've quite an important communication to make to the Circle," said Dr. Hall with an air of great solemnity. "It is my painful duty to tell you that Miss Thurston will not be able to accept the presidency of our Circle next year. Indeed she doesn't expect to return to San Benito."

There was a general outburst of lamentation, ejaculation, and finally of expostulation and indignation.

"Not teach our school any more?" cried little John Leib with a quivering lip, looking up into his beloved teacher's face.

"My friends," said Dr. Hall, "you interrupted me. I merely said Miss Thurston was not coming back. A lady of a different name is going to supply her place except in one regard: she will take but one pupil and give him her unremitting attention."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," cried Kate, "I'm entirely opposed to monopolies!"

They crowded about the young pair with hand-shaking and congratulations, all eager to say that it was just what had been predicted and that it was wholly approved.

Then when they settled down again, Mr. Leib said, "Since this is a Chautauqua Circle I think we should come to order and have some speeches. I will call on our friend John Thompson."

So John got upon his feet and said with vastly more ease than he could have made such a speech a year previous, that if Miss Thurston had anything like the success with one pupil that she had had with the Chautauqua Circle, all the ladies in San Benito would be taking lessons. Finally he said that this sort of proceeding in a Chautauqua Circle was a little dangerous as it was apt to be catching, and he looked at Jennie Brooks in a way that was suggestive.

"I will call on Mrs. Brooks," said Mr. Leib, keeping up the show of formality.

Dear Mrs. Brooks stood up and said, "God bless them!" and then sat down. No one else seemed moved to speak so Mr. Leib made his little speech :

"Generally people are not quite pleased with their friends' matches, but here is one we all do like. Chautauqua Circles are good, but happy

homes are better still, and I think from what I see, Chautauqua Circles do make happy homes. I say with Mrs. Brooks to our young friends, God bless you!"

Kate rose superior to her shyness: "Dear friends," she said, "happiness is very sweet, love is very sweet, and I thank you all for what you have said. I think to try to do a little good in the world is the sweetest and most rewardful thing of all. I say with all my heart, God bless my Chautauquans!"



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